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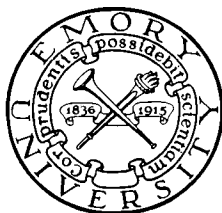
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BY
EDWARD MAYHEW.

AND
OTHER STORIES BY POPULAR WRITERS.

LONDON:
CHAPMAN AND HALL, 193, PICCADILLY.

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KILLED BY MISTAKE, AND OTHER TALES.

KILLED BY MISTAKE.

BY EDWARD MAYHEW, ESQ.



APPEARANCES are deceitful. The gentlest-looking creatures are often the most dangerous. The cat is a more terrible antagonist than the porcupine.

Once I thought differently. Once I formed a theory, in my young days of delightful ignorance, that man was the only animal having a natural love for the pugilistic.

The first line of that beautiful hymn, *Birds in their little nests agree*, suggested an easy and pleasant mode of testing my opinion, and I for a few pence procured a "little nest" of bullfinches. It was an interesting experiment when, with a mess of chopped egg and raw beef, I advanced to feed the emblems of concord with a skewer.

No sooner had I made my appearance, than the five half-naked creatures stretched forth their necks, each screaming at the top of its tiny voice, straining its jaws with unbecoming voracity, and, as if not satisfied with the choking size of the mouthfuls I administered, making more than once serious attempts to swallow the instrument on which they were presented. When I locked up my fledglings for the night, it was with a conviction that, at any rate, birds were not patterns for little children, as to behaviour at meals.

The next morning, however, on looking at them, I found the two largest and strongest of the family in possession of the nest; they having actually kicked their dear little brothers and sisters

out of bed. There lay the two unnatural fledglings, comfortably snoozing, with half-closed eyes, no ways disturbed by the piteous cries of the ejected, who were tumbling about the bottom of the box in heart-rending disorder; nor was I able to arrange the difference between them. What they quarrelled about I cannot imagine; but, as often as I put the little ones to bed, the larger thumped them out again, so that in the end they caught cold and died. Their death-groans must have been heard by their unfeeling relatives, who, however, still seemed to doze as luxuriantly as usual, insensible even to the horrors of fratricide!

When these partners in crime could exult on approaching maturity (which was some time before they could help themselves, wherein the feathered and human races materially differ), *they* also one day disagreed, and from that period fought so dreadfully and constantly, that, for the sake of peace, I was compelled to place them in different cages—though this arrangement was far from producing quiet, for often would they flutter, and shriek their unavailing wrath at one another through the bars of their prisons; and, as if to give my amiable theory, and the poet's dreaming, a more decided overthrow, they both, when molting season came, discovered themselves to be ladies!

I was hurt, but not convinced; defeated, yet not silenced; and, sometime afterwards, finding in Milton a dormouse mentioned as symbolical of harmlessness, I procured a pair of regular sleeping beauties. It being winter, during which such animals snooze continually, my theory for some time passed uninjured: but early, very early in the spring, I heard a squeak, and on looking into the cage, beheld the tiny brutes actually *boxing*—sitting up on their haunches, and fighting with their hands as if they had been Britons. Nor were they more forgiving than other animals. Frequently would one fellow turn the other out of their nest, and then place itself at the entrance to prevent a return. If the poor outcast ventured a remonstrance, up went the victor's fist, and "dealt a smasher on the sneezer," with the dexterity of one who had studied the noble art of self-defence. This was a deathblow to my theory, and convinced me that poetical conceptions are beautiful prejudices, and man not only the first, but, with all his faults, the best of animals.

The aim of these retrospections is to introduce my tale genteelly to the notice of my reader, who, unless apprised that the most gentle of Heaven's creatures has what old women call a "spice of the devil" in its composition, might be induced to judge it unnatural. However, natural or not, it is founded on fact. Nature is sometimes a sad rebel, breaking through the laws wise old gentlemen take great pains to discover for her accommodation, with a zest for mischief that fully authorises the grammarians in classing her feminine.

Mail-coaches, as our readers are perhaps aware, only journey to towns. Letters are conveyed thence to the adjacent villages by men who are engaged for this purpose, at a fixed weekly salary, by the country postmaster.

Twenty years ago Michael Bunns went post from W—. In those remote times, communication was not so easy as it is now ; and the postman blended with his government appointment the general business of a country carrier. He took out medicine for the rheumatics, and brought home wheatears for the gentry : sold poultry for the farmers, and bought gown-pieces for their wives ; executed commissions faithfully, and delivered parcels punctually. All this, added to the "fifteen shillings regular," enabled him to keep a nag and employ a lad ; and at one time business had so increased, that Michael pondered whether he should "be doing *wise*" to start a cart ; but after having made himself unwell by anxiously deliberating, he gave up the proud suggestion, and continued the old jog-trot. It was well he did so, for shortly after business got slack ; the postmaster reduced "the regular" three shillings at one fell swoop ; the doctors became more careful, and Michael had fewer commissions of enquiry : farmers' wives grew genteel, and the letterman's taste in prints was no longer to be trusted ; and I am sorry to add, that even the squires combined against the poor man's perquisites. Some refused to continue the plate of cold meat and the cool pint that had heretofore delayed him on his rounds.

The consequence of all this was, that a hoard which had accumulated to fifty golden guineas, at first stood still, then began to decrease. Michael slept a little more than was his custom ; Mrs. Bunns thought the nag did not *want* so much corn, and found out that "pudding-cake and tatics" was an *excellent* dinner two or three times a week. But all was of no avail ; circumstances got gradually worse. Michael no longer proudly boasted he "would not give a fig to call the lord chancellor his uncle," but on the contrary used, as expressive of much mental agony, to wish he "had been born a gentleman."

Now came the hardest blow. Hitherto, as no mail arrived from London on the Monday, the village postman had enjoyed that day as a holiday : but some ill-natured people, who can never bear to see a poor fellow happy, were cruel enough to wish to send letters to London on a Monday. The privileged rest was disallowed, and Michael grieved he had no longer a day he could call his own—he fell into a habit of grumbling. Still he never thought of seeking another employment, but went post, and hoped for better things long after he had published his despair of ever living to see them. The old horse-pistol was punctually drawn and cleaned, and recharged, and Michael, though altered

in many respects, never forgot to brag how he would shoot any man through the head, who should attempt to rob the king's mail in his person. No opportunity ever offered of his proving the sincerity of this threat. The danger he was doomed to encounter was of a different description.

One New-year's Eve, he, having sent the lad forward with the nag and parcels, was leisurely walking up the town. The roads had been newly mended, and the wheels of a waggon which was near, made so much noise as to conceal the clattering of an approaching horseman—one of those little-minded idiots who ride on, and think it brave to risk other people's lives by their carelessness—the first intimation of whose vicinity Michael received in a concussion that laid him on the ground with a fractured skull. The rider, when the mischief was done, hastily bestowed some curses on the unfortunate victim for not getting out of the way, and galloped on. He was never recognised, though suspected to be a young farmer who two years after broke his neck at a steeple-chase.

Leaving Michael to the attention of the passengers by whom he was surrounded, let us peep into his home.

Mrs. Bunns, and her only child, Car—abbreviated from Caroline—were making preparations for the postman's return. A pair of shoes was laid ready in case the good man wished to take off his high-lows. The washing-things were in one corner, and the tea-table was in the centre of the apartment. Little Car, then a girl about eleven years of age, was squatting on a three-legged stool, toasting her own face and a round of seconds bread, which latter article, after it had been clapped between her mother's hands (according to the peasant-recipe for making toast light) and moistened with a spoonful or two of warm water, was to have been nicely buttered for father's tea.

Mrs. Bunns was all of a bustle : it was past the hour for her husband's return ; and report, which tells Michael to have been a good feeling fellow, also adds, that he was as hot in head as heart, if all things did not please him when he arrived tired and cold from his journey.

"Do make haste with that toast, there's a good dear!" cried the woman, as she fidgeted about the room.

Little Car, no less anxious, repeatedly took the bread from the fire to peep and see if it was beginning to do.

They were thus employed when they were startled by the sound of a carriage stopping before the door. At first, Mrs. Bunns doubted the truth of her hearing ; but peeping through the shutters, her eyes confirmed it, and she began to tidy herself, half afraid that so great an honour portended her no good.

The door soon opened, and in came a well-meaning neighbour, entreating Mrs. Bunns not to alarm herself.

Mrs. Bunns as yet knew no reason why she *should* be uneasy, but perceiving from her friend's manner it was time to begin, without indulging idle curiosity became violently agitated.

Then came another considerate neighbour, hoping there was no danger.

Mrs. Bunns understood this as an announcement of some horrible catastrophe.

More neighbours followed, each with a scrap of consolation, till Mrs. Bunns was consoled into so dreadful an alarm as perfectly incapacitated her from meeting the real trouble when it should appear; she was unable even to enquire what so much confusion meant, but stood fiddling with her apron-strings, and looking as if she was going to laugh.

A noise as of feet shuffling upon the pavement, and a feeble moan, as of some one disturbed when asleep, was now heard.

"Clear the way!" cried the doctor's assistant.

Mrs. Bunns fainted across the threshold, which was soon effectually blocked up by a group of females, pulling the poor woman as though they sought to tear her piecemeal, and giving energetic expression all the time to that excessive pity they were unanimous in feeling for her situation.

At length the doorway *was* cleared, and several men entered, carrying Michael in their arms.

Warm water was called for.

Three women rushed at the same time to make themselves useful—upset the teakettle—put out the fire—and scalded the cat. A dispute instantly arose concerning who did it.

Warm water was again demanded.

Mrs. Bunns, now showing some symptoms of revival, was shaken and pinched to make her tell where the wood was kept. Car, whom no one had hitherto thought of, brought some instantly, and half-a-dozen of the senior visitors volunteered their assistance to rekindle the fire, which had hardly been set light to, before one seized the bellows, and another the poker, and zealously extinguished it again.

Warm water was once more asked for, in a more impatient manner.

A female who lived at the extreme end of the town, wondered "if her kettle was on," and ran off to discover, while others sent for the relatives of Michael, who soon crowded the apartment.

It was ten o'clock before Mr. Bunns was left by the medical gentleman, who, seeing the house thronged, gave very particular orders that his patient was to be kept low, and on no account to be disturbed by visitors.

Upon hearing this command so particularly insisted on, everyone present felt an irresistible desire *not* to wish poor Mr.

Bunns good-night," and, after each had reminded the other what the doctor had said, up stairs they all went—on the toes of their iron hoofs to be sure—and found themselves two-deep round the sick man's bed.

One wondered if the sufferer (who, as if desirous of quiet, lay with his eyes closed) retained his senses. The probability of this being the case was considerably discussed in whispers, till, to settle the question, a very kind old woman shook Michael by the shoulder, and asked,

"Do you know who I am, Mr. Bunns?"

Michael slowly raised his eyes, and answered "Yes;" then, probably pained even by so slight an effort, he added, "Do, let me alone."

Looks significatory of discernment were exchanged, and a long pause followed, after which the company began, one by one, to drop off.

About midnight the house was quiet. Michael had fallen asleep. Car and Mrs. Bunns were sitting before the fire—the mother staring stupidly under the fender, and the daughter attentively inspecting her parent's countenance. Thus they remained for more than an hour, when Mrs. Bunns all at once remembered it was past the usual time for going to bed.

"Shall I say my prayers, mother?" asked the child, when she was undressed.

"Never mind, to-night," was the reply as Mrs. Bunns quitted the room without the customary hug at parting.

The fact is, her mind was laden with heavy thoughts. She pitied Michael—felt for him—but she had fears in which my opulent reader will hardly sympathise. Still she was not a selfish woman. I never knew a more considerate creature; but all that night, as she lay awake, she could not help asking herself, "Where was the money to come from, if Michael continued long ill?"

On the following day, numerous enquiries were made after the postman. Many remembered him to have been a good-natured fellow, and few came to ask after him empty-handed. One brought a bottle of wine, a second a nice bit of bacon as a relish, a third a slice of baked meat and potatoes quite hot. It was in vain Mrs. Bunns told each of these well-meaning persons that the doctors had ordered low diet, fearful of inflammation; they all advised her that "there was no good in attending *too much* to what doctors said, for they didn't know better than others did sometimes; and, at all events, a *little of something* now and then could not hurt a babe." Many of the higher, or, as they are sometimes called, the *better* orders, also came to ask after the postman, and to soften the sick man's couch by timely donations; so that though Michael was long ill, and never earned a

penny, yet during all that time the family were better supplied than ever.

The surgeon who attended Michael had not performed his operation so carefully, but a portion of congealed blood remained within the skull. This produced no immediate effect, and the postman was thought to be rapidly recovering, when he was one day seized with a violent fit. From this time he could never be left alone, and his daughter became his nurse and companion. Children certainly are welcome attendants in the time of distress. There is no ostentation in their pity. Our pride is never alarmed by their commiseration. Napoleon felt this, who, when he returned from Waterloo, chafing under his defeat so that none dared approach him, took refreshments which were handed to him by a child. To Michael the presence of his daughter was a great consolation, nor did the girl ever grieve him by appearing to feel the confinement. She would lie by him on the bed, and busy herself with amusing importance with his pillows; if he ached, her little hand could rub and soothe, where a heavier touch had pained; and even her conversation was to him delightful, for she always talked of what was to be done when he got well; her heedless prate frequently made him forget the present in anticipations of the future, though Car usually ended these conferences by making her father repeat a promise he had given her concerning a new black silk spencer and a sky-blue frock.

Thus things continued for nearly fourteen tedious months, Michael growing worse rather than better, and his wife and child gradually becoming exhausted in means, and, from constant watching, in strength also. At length the scene appeared about to close. Amid death's distractions, the poor fellow still clung to his child; but when the latter saw her father struggling, and heard a nurse who had been hired speculating to her mother about "how long it would be before all was over," she comprehended the truth and burst into tears.

The woman would have removed her, saying she disturbed her father; but Michael called out "No, no!" and seemed by his motions to wish her nigh him. Car slowly and timidly approached the bed. A momentary cessation from pain enabled him to speak, and, regardless of all else, he turned to his child and said, "Don't cry, Car—I shall soon be better off."

He had hardly uttered these words when he was again seized. He never spoke after. In ten minutes from that time, Michael Bunns was a corpse.

I shall notice the funeral no farther than to observe,—we are accustomed to laugh and exaggerate about *Irish wakes*, while no notice is ever taken of the less pardonable and more disgust-

ing feasting and revelry which wind up an English burial. To those who have witnessed an Irish wake, the remembrance cannot be unmingled with something of poetical wildness and solemnity. The stories current respecting it have some foundation, but are grossly untrue where they represent *drink* as the chief object of these meetings. *Charity* is the real purpose ; for all deposit something towards the expenses of interment who attend a wake, which is usually prolonged or shortened according to the sum necessary, or the circumstances of the deceased. What excuse have the English for *their* funeral feasts? The joke, I think, ought to be reversed, if, indeed, this be at all a subject for merriment.

When "*the bustle*" was over, Mrs. Bunns was left alone for a week or two. Most people are afraid to be the first, even in a good cause. At last a neighbour recollected she should like a chest of drawers Mrs. Bunns had, and thought, under circumstances, she might wish to part with them. This began the widow's pillage. Many of the articles were sold materially under their real value, but some were bought above the most preposterous estimation. In the end, perhaps, the poor woman got what upon the whole was due for her goods ; but there was one article nothing could induce her to sell. This was the old horse-pistol. *That* she *would* keep, she said, for Michael's sake. An odd kind of remembrancer the reader may think ; but she had many associations in her mind attached to it ; and those, perhaps, who would sneer at this trait in the poor woman, would stare with reverence should they see Nelson's cast-off clothes preserved in a glass-case at Greenwich. The feelings in both cases are the same.

At last, all was sold that could be parted with ; then many asked, "What poor Mrs. Bunns intended to do?" Those who had supported Michael during his illness were probably glad of an excuse to discontinue their charity, or at all events, could not be expected to prolong it to his family ; however, after a time, a few friends took the widow's case in hand. The first proposition, of course, was the parish. Then came the hard struggle between shame and necessity, which ended in two shillings a week out-door relief. This was obviously not sufficient. Mrs. Bunns's health precluded the probability of bodily labour ; she was constitutionally sickly. What was to be done? A day-school was voted an excellent idea ; several mothers instantly volunteered their offspring, and terms were arranged. Threepence for general instruction, which included letters and words in one syllable ; fourpence if "work" was expected ; but sixpence for such as brought their dinners and were to be looked after all the day. To be sure, Mrs. Bunns could barely read print, and had not the remotest idea of deciphering writing ;

but that was no objection—half the scholars were too young to learn, and the rest too wilful to be instructed. The chief duties of such schoolmistresses consist in nursing four of the youngest at a time, and throwing a cane about, to frighten such of the juvenile Britons as incline to hostilities.

This nursery, which rose to thirty children, was held in the parlour, a room 10 feet by 12 ; it produced ten shillings weekly, and a constant running to the parish doctor. It would have soon killed a stronger body, but Mrs. Bunns was a rocking-stone—never steady, but never down.

Car added her mite to the family store ; she found employment at sixpence a day in the shop of a neighbouring upholsterer. I have often watched her tripping lightly to work on the sharp frosty mornings—thinly clad, with a handkerchief tossed over her shoulders as an excuse for a shawl, and her bare arms reddened by the frost. At night, too, I have seen her running home with her earnings—all happiness !

It must have been a hard struggle when Car left the upholsterer's to learn a trade at a straw-bonnet maker's ; for two years she could earn very little, though even during her apprenticeship she laboured to increase the widow's mite. A lady of an exceeding reputation for charity delighted in bestowing shirts on labouring men. Mrs. Bunns and her daughter obtained some of these to make at sixpence each. Often have they sat up long past midnight, stitching at these charitable trophies, till exhausted nature has compelled them to retire. I do not wonder that the girl became her mother's chiefest tie to this world. I have frequently seen the old woman—she was very ugly—gazing at her daughter with an affection that even the plainness of her features could not render uninteresting to me ; and she has sometimes told me, she did not know how it was, but she was afraid some harm would come to Caroline, *because she had so set her heart upon the girl*. Reader, there was nothing of prophecy in this ; such feelings are natural to the unfortunate.

Many of the gossips of W—— were equally foreboding in their opinions of the little straw-bonnet maker's destiny ; but for very different reasons. She was by no means a strict chapel-goer ; she never had attended Sunday-schools ; had actually refused to deliver tracts, or collect in aid of missionaries ; but she loved walking and talking—laughed, and did not appear offended when she was complimented—had successively sported a new silk and a muslin gown ; and, as if in confirmation of the worst suspicions, had acknowledged to a very considerate and worthy person, who was speaking to her for her good, that she had no objection to a *gentleman* for her husband—if she could get one !

Now the town of W—— was, once in every two years, visited

by a travelling company of comedians — as sorry a set of miserable aspirants as were ever above pity or below respect. These “members of *the* profession” peregrinated under the commands of a Mrs. Wiggins, a little fat widow, who took snuff and her own money; yet who, although in her sixtieth year, occasionally, as manageress, appeared in several “pet parts.” I have seen her waddle through Portia, and whistle Helen Mac Gregor, ever and anon halting in the dialogue to count the house, or by-playing at the side-scenes with anxious enquiries concerning who was at the door. But it is not with this antiquated vanity I have to do; I mention the dame only to give my intelligent reader a more perfect idea of the respectability of the concern to which my hero was attached.

Charles Wiggins, only son of Mrs. Clarissa Wiggins, by filial duty urged, undertook the active cares of the management: and, as a natural consequence, the representation of all the best parts. He was stout and coarse in his appearance, suffered his whiskers to luxuriate in bushy negligence, and always plastered a full fourth of his hair upon his forehead, in affectation of a lovelock. There are many such men;—fellows who wear thick boots and shooting-jackets;—who whistle to every cur they meet, but never shoot a sparrow; and who, because they are the pot companions of grooms, imagine they must be competent judges of horseflesh. Mr. Charles was wholly without mind. The smallest emergency dilemma’d him; nevertheless, by the aid of a swagger, some village theatrical notoriety, the use of a few slang commonplaces, and continued smoking, this man managed to gain, and to keep, the character of a “talented person.” What a bubble is reputation!

The company having arrived, two of the players hired one room in the house adjoining that occupied by Mrs. Bunns; and these histrionic provincials chancing, while brushing their shoes in the back-yard, to see and speak with little Car, modestly intimated, that day at rehearsal, much that was more flattering to their own characters than to hers. Charles Wiggins listened till he felt himself grow curious, and that same afternoon he called upon the gentleman to enquire, as manager, “what they had *studied*.” They walked together into the garden, where, as if fate had willed it so, he saw across the little fence, Car Bunns, and, having caught her eye, with becoming ease relaxed into a smile.

We ought to be a very good people when the simple act of smiling can be construed into evidence of depravity; but I am afraid Mr. Wiggins was not the only person who would have judged illiberally of Car, because when she saw him laugh, she also, in the merry imprudence of a young heart, tittered as she ran into the house. The next moment she returned to the door

to peep at the gentleman who had noticed her. Was there anything extraordinary that a young woman should feel inquisitive about the personal appearance of a man who had bestowed on her his marked attention? I am sure many very virtuous ladies would have acted similarly, only with sufficient prudence not to have been detected. Charles Wiggins perceived the door move; conjecturing the cause, he kissed his hand, nodded his head, and finished these delicate attentions with a wink that made Car colour and retire.

Jealousy is not the only passion that hails "trifles light as air" (which, by-the-bye, some meddling philosophers want to make us believe is particularly heavy) as "confirmation strong." All bad passions are equally illiberal. Charles felt confident that Car was anxious for his advances, and he resolved to visit her without delay.

When he entered the house he was somewhat disconcerted at seeing Mrs. Bunns there, who was busily employed putting the school-room to rights, the scholars having been but recently dismissed. The widow comprehended her daughter to be the magnet that had attracted her visitor, and not exactly feeling confident as to how she ought to behave, began to arrange the dirty books and letter-cards with a great deal of unnecessary precision. In fact, when anyone dressed as a gentleman (and in the poor widow's idea Mr. Charles looked a perfect gentleman) enters the dwelling of a peasant, the latter always feels as though his authority were superseded, and looks about as if anxious for an opportunity of escaping; nor is this more than natural. There can exist no friendly sympathy between rich and poor.

"Should you like to go to the theatre?" at length enquired the manager, stretching himself upon a chair so as to make the owner tremble for its existence.

"Thank you, Sir, I'm too old for plays," replied Mrs. Bunns.

"But your little daughter. My dear, you're not too old, are you?"

"Oh! I should like it of all things," said Car quickly; and then, fearful she had acted imprudently, she added almost in a whisper, "that is—if you please, Sir."

"And I'm sure you'll look devilish pretty in the boxes," cried Wiggins, with a leer, as he began to write.

What a gull is a mother's vanity. A moment ago and Mrs. Bunns would have refused to allow her daughter to visit the theatre even in her company, and had been going to urge something about "a job being finished," as an excuse for declining the player's offer, when his silly compliment interrupted her, and she now silently gave her approval to Car's going alone.

The order was written, and the manager departed.

The straw-work was laid aside for the rest of the afternoon. The best dress was to be got ready. There was muslin to darn, and calico to stitch ; collars to starch, and stockings to wash. The mother lost her temper ; she was not pleased with what her daughter was preparing for ; she wanted resolution to oppose the thing itself, but she bestowed numerous complaints on all that was needed to carry it into effect. "They should never be ready. Better put it off to another time. It was no use to try, it couldn't be done." But Car was of a different opinion. "A pin was as good as a stitch where no one could see ; and those stockings would do very well ; she never caught cold ;"—and when she did trip off, arrayed in all her finery, her pride received pleasure from the tribute paid by the ejected heads of the neighbours.

"That's Caroline Bunns ; I know her ; she works for Miss Sticher," cried a little loiterer, as our heroine whisked by him, in all the turbulence of excessive excitement, into the long sawdusted passage of the theatre,—at the further end of which sat the manageress, calmly contemplating a short six stuck into a ginger-beer bottle.

"Where did you get this?—Eh ! *for the boxes !*" cried the old woman, the moment the order was presented.

"He put his name to it, Ma'am," answered Car, somewhat sharply.

"Did he, my dear ? We shall see. — Dearlove," shouted Mrs. Wiggins to a little pockmarked nondescript, "tell Bol-lingbrook I wants Mr. Charles ;" and having spoken, the order and the bearer were by turns condemned to undergo a most unsatisfactory scrutiny.

Exposed to the enquiring looks of all who entered, and the rude remarks of the dirty vagabonds who loitered about the doors, Car was left standing in the passage which answered as a lobby to the theatre, while Mrs. Wiggins, in no suppressed voice, held a conversation with Dearlove and the female dresser concerning who our heroine was, and what claim she had to sit in the boxes of her establishment. An auditor of this humiliating investigation, Car began to feel ashamed of the fine clothes that had so lately exhilarated her, and could not make up her mind whether she should cry, remain and be insulted, or walk indignantly away. She was spared the pain of a decision ; a plume of feathers was seen issuing from behind a side-door.

"Did you give this person an order for one to the boxes ?" shouted Mrs. Wiggins, the moment she recognised her son.

"Am I to manage the concern or not ?" was the rejoinder. "You know my writing, and I'll put a stop to this. Step this way, if you please, my dear," he added, opening the door to the boxes with one hand, while Car felt the other protectingly

pressed near her heart, which beat quicker in acknowledgment of the attention.

Mr. Wiggins, like many others, considered the privilege of making a blackguard of himself with impunity as the highest proof of authority. He never missed an opportunity of endeavouring to gain public consideration by doing every thing in his power to forfeit public respect ; and Car, when she made one of the audience, heard, in common with the rest, the following oration delivered with fervent emphasis :

“ Once for all — this is the last time — mind that — that’s enough — I’m blown if I stand it. If I’m not fit to manage this concern, get some one else to fill my situation. I know my business, and I’ll suffer no one to call me off the stage just when it’s time to ring up. No man could stand it. How do you think the lord chancellor could manage the laws of the country if he was to be called to by the king every time he was agoing to begin ? I’m no muff ; I’m not afraid of getting another situation. I ought to have been in London but for you. I’m the support of the whole concern, and you’ll drive me away. You’ll disgust the audience, you’ll knock up the company, and ruin the town. I’ll take off my things and go before the audience and explain all about every thing, if you refuse my orders at the door — mind that. I’m no fool, and you shall see it ! ”

The mother said not a word to her son, but, when he was out of hearing, delivered an essay on her ruin and respectability to her attendants.

After “ the leader ” had played a choice variety of solos on the violin, occasionally accompanied by the feet of the audience, the bell rang, up went the curtain, and Mr. Charles spouted forth, the delight of all beholders. He was a fine man ; he wore the best dresses, and vermilioned his cheeks, corked his lips, and chalked his nose, till he made himself look quite unnaturally handsome. He was so brave too : he always ranted when he was *on* the stage, and he was always heard storming at the other players when he was *off* it ; while between the acts he kept every now and then pulling the curtain on one side, and stamping his foot heroically at the fiddler.

Three weeks ago, Car had declined the fair half of a French-polisher’s income ; last Sunday she had refused to let a very proud young painter salute her. It was unknown the offers she had treated with similar coldness ; but now came her hour of trial. What a hero must that man be whom all seemed to fear ! As, full of wonder about “ how they could do it,” Car was leaving the theatre, Charles Wiggins joined her. The girl, flattered by his attention, looked smilingly at his face. The colour had not fled his manly cheek — “ the *pure* red and white,” as the

novelists say, stood there unfaded ; and, to add to these graces, he was habited in the identical buff boots and white spangled pantaloons he had exhibited on the stage.

A walk was suggested. "Oh, no !" cried Car, "I cannot think of such a thing, it's so late !" and, to prove the sincerity of her denial, she suffered the gallant Charles to conduct her out of town. To no purpose did the prudent passengers endeavour to warn her of the danger of proceeding, by giving mysterious whistles, or coughing ambiguous hems ! She wanted moral courage to oppose by acts what she would not consent to in words.

A walk by moonlight is very beautiful in reading, but it is very imprudent in reality. Car soon began to repent that she had indulged in the temptation ; but, nevertheless, Mr. Charles was doomed to find out, that those people who fearlessly trust themselves near the edge of a precipice, are not always such as get dizzy and fall. He learnt this lesson with dudgeon, and felt all the irritation of a little mind, treating the girl as though she had wilfully deceived him, when she refused to justify the ill opinion he had formed of her.

Mutually dissatisfied, they had regained the suburbs, when a party of night brawlers was heard advancing. Car crept nearer to her companion for protection. Of his courage she entertained no doubt ; she was only fearful, after the excessive display he had made of unnecessary ferocity in the theatre, lest he should be *too* brave.

"Oh, Charley, old cock !" cried the drunken exciseman, "is that you? Oh ! hem ! you're engaged—pleasant night for a walk, Miss—very pleasant, particularly when company's agreeable—ha ! ha ! ha !"

While the man had been addressing her, Car had in vain pulled at Mr. Wuggins's arm, to intimate her desire of proceeding. The player would not understand her, but stood and grinned at all the exciseman said ; nor could Car's most violent efforts distract his attention. Vexed at this, and hardly knowing what to do, she imprudently answered, "Yes, Sir, it is very pleasant."

"Soho ! soho !" bawled out one of the party, who had once had his ears boxed by Car for some impertinence : "I'll swear that's Car Bunn's, and if she don't give me a kiss I'll tell ;" and upon this he seized the girl in his arms.

It was in vain Car exerted her utmost strength ; her struggles seemed only to increase the glee of her assailant. In vain did she call on Mr. Wuggins for assistance ; her cries were mimicked by the revellers, while he to whom they were addressed studiously displayed how much they amused him ; and when at last she did escape, it was only to be captured by another, and com-

pelled, with all the cruelty of drunken hilarity, to undergo fresh insults. As this man, who was standing near a lamp, forced the girl's face towards him, he perceived a large patch of red paint upon her forehead, and glancing at the player's cheeks, he shouted out, "I say, Charley Wuggins, do you mark all your little lambs with ochre in this way?"

"Let me go!" cried Car; "let me go, I say.—You're tearing my clothes, man!" as with a desperate effort she freed herself, when Charles Wuggins caught her by the sleeve.

"My dear," said he, laughing, "never mind them. I'll persuade them not to say a word about what has happened."

"I don't care what they say," replied Car, trembling with passion, and hurrying away. Charles Wuggins looked after her for a moment, then, laughing as in pity of the poor girl's folly, he rejoined the brawlers with the affected ease of a man whose character had recently been exalted by some important discovery.

The rain began to fall before Car reached her home; and when she got there, to add to her distress, her mother had fallen asleep, nor could she be awakened by the loudest demands for admittance, though they disturbed every neighbour in the street. Mrs. Cowley, who rented the next house, thrust forth her head to enquire the cause of the disturbance. This woman was one of those who are pensioned as soldiers' widows. Not necessitated to labour, and by education made unmindful of domestic comforts, such females have a vast deal of time on their hands, which they considerably bestow on their neighbours' affairs.

From Mrs. Cowley's obtruded vision Car shrank under the portal, and hoped, by not replying to her interrogatories, to escape detection; but the old soldier was not to be so easily manœuvred: she descended to the door, shivering and puffing, candle in hand, complaining of the risk she was running all the while, and putting forth her head, exclaimed—

"Bless me alive! Miss Bunns! how can you wake all the people in this way? What has kept you out so late? It's three o'clock (it was not one, but very *good* people, in a virtuous cause, will cheerfully make any sacrifice). And how you are pulled! That skirt's torn nearly off. So nice as I saw you go out! Couldn't help saying to myself, if you were a child of mine, I should be very cautious. The men get worse and worse. But do step in. I'm sure I would not refuse a cat shelter on such a night as this; and when we have put you to rights, and seen how things are, I'll rap at the wall for your mother."

Car, vexed that she was recognised, refused the invitation.

"You had much better be advised," continued Mrs. Cowley. "You don't know how your things are pulled! They can be no Christians—" here she turned up her eyes, and shook her head

solemnly—"who have used a poor girl in that manner. People ought to be made of money to afford it. It's too bad a great deal. And you've nothing but your character to depend on. They ought to be ashamed to keep you out so late. All decent people have been abed and asleep these six hours. I was just thinking of getting up myself when you woke me."

The dialogue was interrupted by Mrs. Bunns enquiring if her daughter was there ; and being answered in the affirmative, the door was opened.

"I'm sure you'll want a light," said Mrs. Cowley, who, anxious to acquaint herself with the full extent of our heroine's misfortunes, was following, candle in hand, when Car hastily pushed the door to, and shut her out.

"Well, well!" she was heard to mutter, "tut, tut, tut! That speaks more than I'd have said without it. It's a decent return for kindness! No matter: them whose ways are dark, has no need of candles. Has they, Car Bunns?"

"What's the matter with Dame Cowley?" asked Mrs. Bunns.

"How should I know? Get to bed, mother: you'll catch cold standing there."

"No, I hope not. But you must be wet, Caroline. Had you been standing outside long? I can't think how I came to fall asleep: it's so unlike me. What's the time?"

"How should I know? Don't stand talking, but go to bed."

"Well, I will directly. But you'll want a light. Your supper's put by in the window."

"I'm not hungry. Pray go to bed, mother."

Our heroine passed a miserable night. While at the play she had often speculated on the pleasures of a theatrical life. To wander about the country seemed delightful to her, now full of youthful restlessness. To wear smart clothes—to act, and be applauded—more than concealed from her inexperience the poverty and contempt which gradually induce the self-abasement of the stroller's wife. Then she did not imagine it possible for Mr. Charles to think of her dishonourably—she who had refused so many that thought themselves his superiors. In a few hours all her thoughts how changed!

"I can't think what has happened. Something must be the matter, people are running about so. I'll step out and see," said Mrs. Bunns, who, early the next morning, observed the neighbours paying and returning visits with communicative alacrity; but Car, who feared this gadding concerned her last night's adventure, prevented her mother's departure—and her fears found corroboration in the bold and inquisitive manner in which the people stared into the window as they passed the house. For a few days our heroine never quitted her work, and Mrs. Bunns was quite delighted with her daughter's industry.

Meanwhile Car hoped that her disasters were forgotten : the shock was therefore more felt when, having finished a very difficult job, Miss Sticher, her employer, informed her she had "no more work at present." To the mother this was perfectly incomprehensible ; she could in no way account for it.—It was the height of summer. The sun was using his warmest endeavours to make work for straw-bonnet makers, and no later than last Sunday the three Miss Grunts had complained to the minister of their feelings at being compelled to stop away from chapel because Miss Sticher had disappointed them. Car pretended many excuses to persuade her mother there was nothing extraordinary in this lack of employment, but the old woman was, notwithstanding, made so unhappy that she for the first time in her life attended prayer-meeting that night.

When Mrs. Bunns returned she was unusually dejected. Car was fearful to enquire the cause ; though she could not refrain from observing that it seemed somewhat strange her mother had never once asked her about the play, or mentioned the late hour of her return.

Thus things continued, Car living at home, obtaining a few pence by "shop-work," that is, making shirts and smock-frocks, but chiefly eating bread she had not earned. The dinners sometimes were scanty—then one or two of the most respectable scholars stayed away—and at last Mrs. Bunns lost her temper oftener, and exercised more authority than was natural with one of her quiet and retiring disposition. Car felt the change, and her heart grew heavy ; her confidence deserted her ; she avoided company, and betrayed by numerous little acts and arts that she was ill at ease. She knew that she was welcome to share her mother's crust ; the old woman would have been grieved had she thought otherwise ; but when she had earned 15s. a week, her mother never scolded her. Her mother was unhappy ; there was something lying heavy on her mind, and her silence told Car what that something was. What could she do ? She pondered long, and frequently her meditations were interrupted by tears. Ultimately, she determined to wait on her late mistress ; and if the loss of work in any way concerned her conduct with Charles Wiggins, to confess everything, to tell the whole truth ; and then she thought Miss Sticher, who had heretofore behaved kindly, would re-employ her. But before she did this it might be well to see some of the young women who had "seats" in the house ; and watching the time when the hands left for their dinner, Car encountered her former companions. All with one accord pretended not to see her, and passed on. Willing to be deceived, Car spoke to one of the girls ; the wench took to her heels, as though some danger had approached her, and at a short distance they stopped and

grouped together in busy consultation, every now and then turning their heads to survey our heroine, who, after this unexpected reception, was afraid to proceed in her plan. Miss Pinner, the milliner of Miss Sticher's establishment, ultimately left the party, and telegraphing to Car with her hand, signified she desired a conference.

What could this mean? Why should *Miss Pinner* speak to *her*? Reasons must be urgent when a *milliner* publicly condescended to address a *straw-bonnet maker*. How delicate are the shades of society! The bishop sneers in the presence of the curate. The physician makes not an equal of the general practitioner. The Old Bailey Ciceros frown on their employers the attorneys. But the liberal professions are not the only ones that teem with illiberality. Milliners seldom congregate with dressmakers, and dressmakers keep straw-bonnet makers at a proper distance.

"Miss Bunns!"

"How do you do, Miss Pinner?" replied Car, timidly.

"I come to say," haughtily continued the milliner, without deigning to notice her inferior's civility, "that the young ladies wishes, as you doesn't work for Miss Sticher now, that you wouldn't think o' speaking to none of 'em in the street."

"Why?" asked Car, colouring, "I'm sure there's no reason they should hold themselves my betters. I'm as good as them."

"I dare say. We've heard nothing about you," responded Miss Pinner. "If people said all manner o' things, I'd not be one to listen. Only—to be sure—Miss Sticher mightn't like the young ladies to talk with you, now you've lost your seat of work."

"I don't know what people can have to say about me."

"No more don't I. I've said nothing what people said. Don't go and say I told you anything. I'm not one to fetch and carry, for my betters even. Only the young ladies would be talked about, if they stood in the street with such as you now."

Without waiting longer, Miss Pinner flaunted away, and rejoined her companions, who flocked round her, curious to hear the result of her awful embassy. Car was more hurt than offended: her feelings annihilated her pride. At another time she would have received such a message with more than equal spirit; perhaps would have boxed the ears of the messenger. Now, in the humility of suffering, she with difficulty refrained from tears. Once more she hesitated to pursue her original intention of seeing her late mistress; but fearing that so favourable an opportunity of finding Miss Sticher alone might not again offer, she, mastering her reluctance, slowly entered the house, and walked up stairs to the work-room.

"Come in there," answered Miss Sticher, in reply to Car's knock at the door. "Oh, it's you Miss Bunns, is it?" and the lady continued her dinner with increased appetite.

"She never called me *Miss Bunns* before," thought Car.

The room in which Miss Sticher was discovered was a large dirty apartment almost unfurnished. Strings passing to and fro from the walls were thickly hung with misshapen articles of straw-work, waiting to be pressed into bonnets; in one corner stood a small deal table, on which was placed, beside a new and fashionable mahogany-framed looking-glass, a pint basin full of muddy soapsuds; no towel was perceptible, and the liquid looked as if it had been in use for ages; beneath this was a cracked red pan half full of coals—but why need I particularise all the filth of that most filthy place, a straw-bonnet maker's work-room? There is a triangle on the mantelpiece, which, surrounded by tracts and china ornaments, will convey more to the imagination of the reader than the most elaborate description. One side of this triangle is composed of a contaminating horn comb, the next a mass of tallow, looking as though a candle had been sweltered up a chimney, while, touching each of these, so as to complete the figure, is a slimy half-sucked piece of barley-sugar. The reader may depend on it, this is no exaggeration.

Miss Sticher, notwithstanding it was the middle of June, was sitting before the fire with her face tied up, looking the embodied essence of all the miseries of her occupation; her dinner rested on her knees, consisting of mutton-broth and cold beef-pudding; and on a chair by her side was placed a cabbage-leaf full of strawberries, and several pieces of gingerbread, waiting her attentions.

"I've called, Miss Sticher," said Car, "to ask if you wanted hands?"

"No—*besides*—no—no!" and to excuse her not replying more largely, the lady filled her mouth, so as to incapacitate her from speaking.

"I can't think, Miss Sticher, what I have done to offend you."

"Oh! you didn't offend me," replied the mistress; "*only*"—and, unwilling to explain her reasons, Miss Sticher repeated the delicate artifice she had before used so successfully.

"It's very hard on me," continued Car. "I was the oldest hand you had. I shouldn't have minded if it hadn't been the middle of the busy time. Every body's suited now: there's no chance of getting a seat any where, and I'm sure my work always gave satisfaction."

"I'd no great fault to find—*only*"—the plate was empty, and Miss Sticher, feeling that, in what her late journeywoman had uttered, there was something bordering on an accusation, roused

to self-defence, no longer ended with the palliative—"only, I'm forced to be very particular about character," she continued; "I would not be spoken ill of for the world. It would ruin my business: so many young ladies as are under me—all respectable!"

"What have I done?" asked Car, blushing to the forehead.

"Ask your own conscience."

"My conscience is clear enough; I wish other people's tongues were so."

"Sure, Miss Bunns," cried Miss Sticher, with angry emphasis, "you can't mean to say people would talk as they do if you had given them no reason. I can't bring myself to believe all would be so bad as to tell stories without some truth."

"I'll tell you all about it, Miss Sticher."

"You'd better sit down, perhaps, Miss Bunns;" and Miss Sticher motioned Car to take a chair beside her.

"Now, tell me true, didn't you go out with him?"

In reply, Car entered into a full and particular statement of facts as they occurred; she concealed nothing; she blamed her own imprudence, and lamented her want of caution; but entreated Miss Sticher not to believe that she had, even for a moment, thought of disgracing herself: and when she had finished, the simple girl looked up into her auditor's face, expecting to be received as one who had been wronged and was going to be redressed. Poor thing! she had pleaded her accuser's, not her own, justification; for Miss Sticher, while listening, never credited what she heard, but argued that if Car *confessed* so much, a great deal more even than people said *must have happened*.

"I'm sure I'm very sorry for all that has taken place."

"I hope you don't think hard of me *now*?" said Car, entreatingly.

"It's very difficult to judge anyone nowadays," replied Miss Sticher. "I hope you've spoken the truth."

"Indeed I have—there's nothing I have told a story about, upon my word and honour."

"I am very glad to hear it. I hope you'll get work soon—but—"

"But what?" enquired Car.

"All people mayn't know you as I do—so you see I couldn't prudently think of taking you on again just now awhile."

"Then, in a little time, perhaps?" asked Car, unwilling that her errand should be quite without effect.

"Why, yes. If things go on well, and nothing more is said between this and *next spring*—why—then—*perhaps*—"

"And what is mother to do through the winter?"

Quite overpowered, Car burst into tears, and was hurrying

from the house, when she met the journeywomen returning from dinner, laughing and talking merrily. Their mirth seemed like an insult to her bitterness, which was increased by a suspicion that she probably formed the subject of their conversation. She did not pause, or look at, but passed them at a quick pace ; and quitting the town, it was dark before she returned to her home.

Car daily became more and more dejected. For the first time, she felt a desire for death. Once she even walked to the river side ; but there her courage failed her, hope suggested that better times were at hand ; and the thought of what her mother would endure for her loss, made Car hasten home, resolved never to think of such a deed again, but to work harder, so that extra exertion might supply the difference between present and former remuneration,—and she did work, till her strength suffered by continued toil — up early and down late. Still the thought would come that all was useless. Want would enter the house at last ; and memory would paint the past, and embitter the recollection with the consciousness that she had not deserved the present.

Even this state, miserable as it was, was too happy not to be disturbed. Once set the curs of scandal on the scent of a woman's reputation, and they will never cease to give tongue till they have run down their victim.

Mrs. Cowley knew a young man who had joked Mr. Charles Wiggins about Miss Bunns, and Mr. Charles could not say a word ; he only laughed ; he denied nothing. Nay, he even went further, for he gave his personal countenance to untruth by resuming his attentions over the wall :—he would spend his afternoons frequently with the next door lodgers, watching for Car, who, though she never replied more than civilly to his questions, was spoken of by the neighbours with more illiberality than if she had displayed the most hardened depravity.

At length the school fell off to three children, and these three belonged to a woman of suspected character and dilatory payment. In those days when thirty scholars came every morning to be kept quiet, Mrs. Bunns had considered much whether these who now constituted her academy ought to be received. She no longer scolded—she sat continually looking up at the ceiling, and seemed, in the full sense of her misery, incapable of exertion either to combat or improve her fortune. At night, Car, who lay beside her, often knew, by the jogging of her mother's shoulders, that the old woman was awake ; and if—as was now frequently the case—she started from her sleep, the bed was unoccupied by her mother, who was praying. Those prayers were to Car as bitter reproaches. She could not join in them, except to wish she had never lived !

The point at which misery ceases to be passive our heroine

had now attained. She no longer hoped—she began to act ; and if her actions seem strange, let the reader remember and make allowance for her situation. There is no rashness like that of despair—Car's dreamt that, after all, Mr. Wiggins *might* be desperately enamoured of her, and perhaps would marry her, if people would only let him alone !

Under this delusion, she became more talkative ; and, notwithstanding her mother's repeated entreaties, was ever waiting about the back door. Charles Wiggins, mistaking this for a desire to be his on easy terms, behaved with obvious coarseness ; which Car, educated in a sphere of life where love has little of the delicacy novel-reading young ladies delight in, understood as a desperate determination to wed her, spite of evil report ; and she thought it would be an excellent plan to invite the gentleman to supper—having got her mother out of the house — and then, when quite alone, if he did not anticipate her by a declaration, to ask him plainly what his intentions were. Amid these conflicting fears and wishes, my poor heroine often remembered her father with regret. The postman's boasted bravery, a daughter's memory never doubted. Had he been alive, people had feared to slander her ; or, at all events, he would compel the man who caused her distress by his evil vanity to clear her character by making her his wife : by no very violent jump of her ideas, Car asked if she might not herself protect her own reputation ? A pistol was as deadly a weapon in the hands of an infant as of a giant. Car took her father's neglected weapon from its resting-place ; she pointed it, snapped the lock, and felt certain she could use it with effect.

After a week of such wearing toil as women only are subjected to, Car finished as much work as entitled her to four shillings and sixpence : of this she gave her mother three, the rest she reserved for the preparation of her project. A new loaf, half a pound of fresh butter, a slice of the best cheese, and a pint of sixpenny ale, would, thought my heroine, constitute a very pretty supper. To procure all this her money was barely equal.

Her mother had gone out to nurse a neighbour, and Car, having finished her shopping, spread the cloth and laid the table so tastefully, that when it was done she was quite charmed with the effect, and felt more confident than ever in the result of her experiment. It was not eight o'clock ; the play, she knew, was never over before ten. As she sat watching the time creep on, she felt cold, and it occurred to her that perhaps Mr. Wiggins might like a fire ; whereupon she emptied her mother's coal-cellar. About nine she put on her bonnet and shawl, and, with a trembling hand, commenced loading the pistol. I wonder how she escaped, for, that all might be done correctly, she kept moving the candle about, and holding the powder to the light, as if

desirous of an explosion. This was the last thing necessary : and Car having done it as she recollected to have seen her father, placed the weapon with considerable trepidation under the window-blind for concealment. The time was rapidly approaching for action ; as it neared her confidence became less firm—Car began to repent, and asked herself whether she should not seek her mother, and, by confession, prevent the possibility of proceeding—and doubtless she had not put her plot into execution had there appeared a fair chance by any less desperate means.

The clock struck ten. She trembled as the strokes seemed to fall upon her ear with ominous distinctness. The streets were quiet ; and, as she sat alone, she gazed wildly round, or, starting up, seemed to expect the presence of—she knew not what. Her imagination was, in fact, fearfully excited, when she rose to depart.—Looking round her, the room seemed to assume an unusual appearance of comfort. The supper, carefully laid, gave to the place a look of cheerful happiness that made her think of the past, and hope for the future, till she wept like a soothed child ; and, falling on her knees before a chair, repeated, confusedly, odd lines of hymns, and scraps of prayers, in which a listener would have found no connexion, but which calmed the suppliant to a feeling bordering on resignation.

The night was damp and dark ; nevertheless, the loiterers about the door of the theatre recognised Car Bunns, and bestowed on her a series of low jests, more pregnant with coarseness than wit. Car heard their gibes, but they pained her not. She felt only the more resolved to act with decision ; but when, on the people leaving the playhouse, an old friend of her father's saw her, and said, in a voice of compassion, she had better go home, her spirit seemed subdued, and she had left the place, but, at that instant, wrapped in an old plaid cloak, and carrying a bag of stage properties, approached the object of her anxiety. She had now neither courage nor composure to address him ; but, as if fate favoured her scheme, Charles recognised her, and thus relieved, Car soon recovered a portion of self-possession.

The fellow proposed a walk. Car answered with her invitation to supper.

Those who know anything of country actors will hardly need being informed that the invitation was accepted.

"Go softly—mother's up stairs," whispered Car, as she admitted her gallant.

"Oh, don't fear me—I'm down," replied the player. "What, a fire !—well, it *is* rather cold—that's comfortable. My dear, you'll make a devilish nice little wife for somebody."

Flattering truth !—Car's bosom heaved as she lit the candle ; when Charles Wiggins, glancing at the supper-table, said to

himself, "Only bread and cheese, a pint of ale, and no pipes!"

Insensible to the possibility of discontent, Car looked proudly up, and said,—

"You've not a very good supper, Mr. Wiggins, but I'm sure you'll excuse it."

"Anything does for me. I'm not particular. Bachelor's fare—hem!—bread and cheese and kisses!" said Mr. Charles, catching Car round the waist. "Why, what makes you tremble in this manner?"

"You'll wake my mother," answered Car, as she released herself from his embrace; and, placing a chair for him before the fire, took up her position by his side, so as to be between him and the window, at which she cast a hurried glance, before she proceeded to do the honours of the table.

Wiggins, during supper, said little, and seemed inclined to make up by quantity what his meal wanted in quality.

"Thank you, very little ale indeed for me," said Car, withdrawing her glass before the bottom of it had been well covered—for she knew her supply was small, and was unwilling to interfere with her guest's gratification.

"There's nothing more wholesome for a man than good beer," was the delicate response. "The Saddler's Arms is always in good tap. Where did you get this?"

"At Snelgrove's, Sir."

"I don't like that house. I never use it now. Last season I was there every Sunday, and *gin-and-water* regular. He did nothing for my ben—sold two galleries—that's all! I'll lay he misses me this time—but he may whistle."

"If I'd known where you liked it best, I'm sure I'd have gone there. Shall I go and see if they're open now?" asked Car, knowing at the same time she had not the price of half a pint in her pocket.

"Oh, no—there's no occasion for that," answered Mr. Charles, but in such a tone as certainly conveyed an idea that he had a very exalted notion of his self-denial when he said it. "You shall comfort me, my dear."

The poor girl, full of thought as to how she should make her proposal of marriage to the player, and feeling the delicacy of her situation, allowed Wiggins to draw her towards him, and offered little resistance to his caresses, which rather gratified her, as they favoured the idea she had conceived of his affection.

"Should you like to be an actress?" he asked heedlessly, for the mere want of something to talk about.

"Oh, yes!" cried Car, seizing on the hope that he was about to propose.

"Should you? You'd look well. You've a good stage mug

of your own. Next time we want any supernumeraries, you shall go on."

Car smiled, and hung her head. She did not understand what *going on* as a *supernumerary* meant; and, like all who are very anxious, she construed the doubtful favourably—persuading herself it could be nothing less than something most flattering to her project; and in this mistake she murmured softly—"But people would talk if I wasn't married first."

"Married!" muttered Mr. Charles. "Talk!—let them talk—who cares? I'm sure I don't."

Now Car thought she began to understand what his proposal to go on as a *supernumerary* meant, when he sneered at marriage, and told her to disregard the world's opinion. Her anger rose; she looked towards the window, but felt that, if the light were strong, he might perceive and anticipate her movement, so she affected to snuff the candle, and purposely extinguished it.

The amorous actor hastily took her hand, and rapturously kissed it.

"Now my love, come to my arms! a chaste salute!"

"But you intend to marry me, Mr. Wiggins—don't you?" asked Car in a slow firm voice.

"Of course. Whenever I marry, you shall be at the wedding."

"But you are in earnest?"

"Of course."

"You mean to marry me—on your honour?"

"Of course."

"Then you'll give it me in writing?" and she produced pen, ink, and paper."

Wiggins paused.

Gentle reader, Charles Wiggins's word was as good as his bond—it was impossible to say which was of the less value. No small practitioner, however desperate of fees, would have legalised such a fellow. He was an outlaw to all intents and purposes. Yet when it was proposed to this man to give his bond, he paused. It was a new mode of lying—the form was what appalled him—such is the influence of ceremony over those who hold morality as nothing.

"You'll give me your written promise to marry, won't you, Mr. Wiggins?" repeated Car, in somewhat louder accents.

Charles Wiggins caught up the cat, and sought to concentrate his thoughts upon the animal in order that other ideas might not disturb him.

"You'll give me your promise?" cried Car, in a voice almost authoritative.

"Hush! you'll wake your mother," whispered Wiggins with a grin. "The cat looks half afraid! Pretty puss! pussy!"

"You've been a bad friend to me," said the girl. "You've done me all manner of wrong."

"Pho, pho!" interrupted Wuggins.

"It is all on your account that people talk of me. Mother can't sleep for thinking of it; the school children stop away about it; no one looks on me; I've lost my work; I'm almost starving; I've ruined my health; my character's gone, and you must marry me."

"*Must* I," cried he, feeling that the arguments Car advanced on her side of the question were so many reasons to prevent his agreeing to the proposal. "Be hanged if I do then, my love!"—putting his hands into his pockets and shaking his head with theatrical knowing as he said it.

The manner of the man decided her; keenly sensitive of the insult conveyed, and goaded by it almost to desperation, she cried, "You *shall*, Charles Wuggins," as, seizing the pistol, she levelled it at his head. "Give me your written promise or I'll shoot you dead!"

"Is that pistol loaded? Come, come—no jokes—I'll swear the peace—put it down; do you know what you are at?—you may murder me!"

"And I will, if you don't give me your written promise. I never ran after *you*, you found *me* out. I must have been mad to walk with you; but you know well in your heart, I never forfeited your respect: then what right had you to *laugh*, when people made light of me? I don't want you to have me; you'll never be of good to any poor girl; but I'll have your promise in black and white, that when people shall speak ill of me to mother, the poor old woman may be able to answer them, and not come home here and cry."

Charles Wuggins was completely bothered—he had no courage—no cunning, except when at his ease; and there was something in the girl's manner that fearfully disquieted him. He gazed at her; her bosom swollen—her face flushed—her features fixed; the pistol pointed at his head—his hands moved instinctively towards that member, as if to defend it.

Car, when the man did not reply, but exhibited signs of terror, lost, strangely enough, much of that spirit which had hitherto upheld her. She felt that the business must be concluded quickly, if she were to be the means of its accomplishment. Her real emotion had evaporated, and it was a labour to hold to her resolve. In these circumstances, she thought that, could she utter something terrible, it might frighten the player into obedience, and with this intention she cried,—

"You had better write directly, or I'll *use an oath*!"

The latter part of the sentence sounded oddly, even to the actor's confusion; but he was prevented fully recognising it by

the new appearance that the girl's countenance, immediately afterwards, assumed. To the feverish red, the sickly hue of death had succeeded ; the eyes strained wildly ; the mouth was tightly compressed ; the neck exhibited a painful sight, from the convulsed starting of the sinews.

The actor, as he noticed, mistook the meaning of this change : he, used to stage delineations, thought it displayed nothing else than a fiendish rage ; and fearful of delays with one so wrought, he hastily, by the firelight, scrawled the required promise. He might have taken the weapon from out the girl's hand. When he was most alarmed, she was, in fact, most incapable of injuring him. Her power of motion had deserted her. It was as though her body were undergoing some terrible metamorphosis, and changing to a living statue. All her nerves were fixed ; even the faculty of speech was locked ; but notwithstanding this, her mind retained its energies ; that seemed to survive when her body was as if stiff in death.

"There, all's done !" said Wuggins, having written, and looking up with a smiling face, doubtless certain that the danger was past. "Come, put the pistol down now !"

Car saw him write : a sense of happiness seemed to warm her into life. All she had wished was accomplished : she should be respected again, and her mother would once more be happy. Perhaps—for vanity will mingle with the most opposite feelings—*perhaps* she might be induced to marry Mr. Wuggins, and turn actress as his wife. Car thought all this, unconscious that the pistol remained pointing at the head of the player : the power to remove it had not yet returned to her stiffened arm ; but now that power began ; recurring animation jerked as it were at her sinews : the extremities became slightly convulsed ; her fingers twitched—the pistol went off !

Wuggins uttered a wild and fearful shriek, as he sprang from his chair to fall heavily upon the floor.

Car heard him cry and saw him fall : the truth suddenly shed its full light upon her mind. The man was killed, and she had killed him ! She gasped for breath, and staggered back ; and as she lay on the ground, the remembrance of her doings swam from her—for, on being questioned, she remarked that—the *linnet fluttered very much, and she wondered if it wanted water.*

Let me hasten to a conclusion. Of course, Car Bunns was taken up for the murder. I was present on her first examination before the magistrates of W—. I think a human being never appeared so lonely as she did at this time. All present seemed to widen by their looks the distinction between her and them. Towards the close of the proceedings, the old mother shuffled through the crowd and approached the bench. She had wit-

nessed the trial, and remained in the background while the decision seemed dubious ; but a mother's love made her disregard all else when her daughter's danger appeared to increase.

"Please, Sir," said the old woman, in a querulous voice, "Caroline's my child, mayn't I sit beside her?"

The request being granted, Mrs. Bunns fidgeted to her daughter, who seemed more pained than pleased by her presence.

"Why did you come, mother?" she murmured.

But after a little time the girl appeared cheered by her parent's attentions, and during that examination—which I have since thought was somewhat harshly conducted—the old woman cried the whole time, and played with the hand of her daughter.

At the sessions Car was tried and (the pistol having been proved to be incidentally on the spot) was found guilty of manslaughter only, for which offence she was imprisoned one year. I remember when the sentence was pronounced, the ladies of W. clamoured at its lenity. Are some women disappointed when a case is so disposed of as to require no display of desperate compassion? Such seem always the first to be discontented with mercy, and the first likewise to exclaim against severity.

The last time I saw Car was two years ago (her mother, they told me, had died before her child's release from prison). She was not pretty then, she was very thin, and careless about her person. The people of the place said she was "*strange*," and the lower orders sometimes, out of charity, hired her to do their dirty work, for she had the character of labouring without apparent fatigue, and without choice as to the nature of her employment.

I was greatly grieved to see the change that had taken place in the personal appearance of the pretty little straw-bonnet-maker ; and, with due respect for public opinion, reviewing all the circumstances of this history, I cannot but think it often a mighty tyrant when it interferes in private affairs. The lightest surmise is to it equal to the heaviest accusation—the meanest prejudices to the wisest laws. It judges without evidence, and condemns without appeal :—it drives away such as have sinned, and would return repentant. It hurries on those who otherwise would never have consummated folly by crime.



THE RIVAL COLOURS.

BY ALEXANDER CAMPEELL.

IN a certain sea-port town of Scotland, not above a thousand miles, certainly, from the capital of that kingdom, their lived two brothers of the name of Linn—James, and Andrew.

Both of these persons had at one time been in a respectable way ; but had succeeded, by dint of a steady course of drinking, in getting gradually down in the world, step by step, until there was not an inch of descent left below them. They could go no further. They had, in short, got upon what may be called the dead level of fortune, where there is neither an up nor down, and where, if there is nothing to hope, there is just as little to fear, which is certainly so far comfortable.

It was nothing to the Linns who became bankrupt, they could not be taken in. They would not have lost the tenth part of a farthing, although the whole trading population of the United Kingdom were in the Gazette. A rise in the price of bread, or in any other article or articles of provision, affected not them in the least, simply because they never paid for any, and this, simply again, because they had nothing wherewith to pay for them. They lived on the community ; not, however, in a dishonest way by any means, but in that certain mysterious manner in which all destitute persons live on the community, and which we can explain no further than by saying, that they do continue to live, and that, long after they have ceased to have anything of their own to live upon ; ergo, they do live upon the community ; —a fact this in natural history which cannot be gainsayed.

It must be confessed, however, that this same community treated the Messrs. Linn—as indeed it does, after all, every one who quarters on it—very scurvily ; for their outward persons were in a state of most deplorable dishabille.

They both sported surtouts, or at least we believe they would have so called the articles in question had they been asked,—

and we have no doubt that they really had been surtouts once on a day, and that too within the memory of man, at any rate within the memory of one man, namely their tailor, who, we presume, would have reasons of his own for recollecting the fact.

However this may be, the particular garments in question were really not such as any gentleman of correct taste would choose to take the sunny-side of a fashionable street with on a bright summer forenoon.

One of them, viz. the surtout of the younger brother (button and button-holes having peremptorily refused to do duty any longer), was secured by an invisible cincture of some kind or other. We say of some kind or other ; not having been able to ascertain of what kind it really was ; for it was so ingeniously contrived, and, we may add, so ingeniously worn, that you were made aware of its existence only by a sudden and singular attenuity of the wearer round the middle. This was indeed so great, that he appeared to be half cut through—you could not tell how, or by what.

We certainly do not think misery, under any circumstances, a fit subject for mirth, and we imagine we can feel for the distresses of others as much and as sincerely as our neighbours ; yet there was a something in the appearance and manner of the particular pair of whom we are speaking that really defied “all power of face”—something irresistibly ludicrous.

They were both staid, grave, sagacious men, with long intelligent faces ; and perhaps in this latter personality lay, partly at any rate, that portion of the comic which it was not possible to help associating with them ; for their long intelligent faces were most deplorably dismal—most lachrymose—most lugubrious. If they had not been so very dismal they would, we verily believe, have been heart-rending, but as it was, they looked marvellously like a pair of elderly owls ; not very musical, but certainly most melancholy. Solitary and forlorn looking men they were : but the poor fellows were borne down by poverty—squeezed to death by it. It lay upon them with the pressure of a cart-load of bricks.

The age of the eldest Linn might be, perhaps, about forty, that of his junior about thirty ; and, although sufficiently well known by their own proper patronymics, their friends preferred distinguishing them by the classical names of Pliny the elder and younger.

It is very well known that poverty, like drink, renders people quarrelsome. While a family, or any other small community—perhaps the remark would apply to a large one too—continue in comfortable circumstances, they get on remarkably well. They are all good humour and good nature, and are as kind and

friendly to each other as possible : but the moment that adversity comes upon them, that instant they fall to worrying one another with the most savage ferocity ; each revenging on his neighbour his own particular share of the common suffering.

Such, however, was not the case with the Linns. In adversity, as in prosperity, they continued on the most friendly footing, and conducted themselves towards each other on all occasions with becoming tenderness and regard.

Their common sufferings, indeed, instead of weakening their affection for each other, seemed to have drawn them closer together, and to have increased, in place of having diminished, the intensity of their fraternal love ; and truly there was great need it should ; for they were two only against the whole world, and if they did not condole with and encourage each other, who would ?

Their sufferings, however, were great. They had no regular employment : indeed scarcely any employment at all ; and this being the case, it will readily be believed that they had no use whatever for Meg Dodds's cookery book, nor were in the least interested in the changes of fashion. In truth, they were almost literally starving. They occasionally got jobs, indeed, of various kinds, but these were trifling and afforded them only a temporary relief. Out of the fourteen days they fasted fully thirteen.

One consequence of this severe regimen on the brothers was an extraordinary thinness of person. They wasted away in their surtouts till the latter could have gone twice round them, and buttoned behind with greater ease than they could have buttoned in front when they first got them. In truth, they could at last have both got into one and the same surtout at one and the same time, without much incommoding each other. Under this process of decomposition their faces, too, became daily more and more collapsed, and more dismal and forlorn, till they were at length truly piteous to behold.

It is said that the fortunes of men, when they have got to the lowest possible ebb, are almost sure to take a favourable turn, when they, themselves, give fair play to the good luck that is willing to befriend them. Whether this be a general truth or not we do not know, but certainly the doctrine held good, in one instance at any rate, in the case of the Plinys.

At one period of their career things had come to a crisis. That is, no shift of any kind was left them by which to procure even a mouthful of bread, and all the horrors of absolute starvation stared them in the face ; for, although they had been ill enough off before, they had always contrived to keep soul and body together ; there being several persons who, out of consideration for their former respectability, were in the habit of throwing some little thing in their way occasionally ; but even this

precarious resource had at length failed them. Friends had grown shy, and employment there was none. At this most dismal period of their career then, we say—just when they had reached the lowest depths of misery and destitution—one of those lucky hits to which we have already alluded, befell them. A job presented itself, a capital job, and they obtained it. This was to measure a cargo of wood which had just arrived from the Baltic,—a species of employment in which the Linns had been frequently engaged, and at which they were deemed very expert; for they were very clever fellows—this was allowed on all hands.

The job, however, was not obtained without some difficulty; for there were many competitors for it: but, after a great deal of running and entreating, and calling and recalling, and boring and beseeching, they did obtain it. It was given them, in fact, out of charity; the importer knew of their former respectability and of their present destitution, and on these accounts preferred them to the job—on the express condition, however, that they should have the whole measured off by nine o'clock on the next morning, as it was all to be despatched to the country in various lots, and the purchasers were impatient for possession.

With this condition, it will at once be believed, the starving brothers readily promised compliance. It was one of very easy performance.

This job was the first they had had for three months, and was besides an excellent one; yielding, at the very lowest calculation, a couple of guineas to each—a mighty matter to men in their circumstances, who did not know where to get their breakfast, and who had not been better informed regarding this and similar particulars for many a day before.

But the Linns were perfectly aware of this. They were by no means insensible to it. On the morning on which the work was to be done, they got up betimes, provided themselves with the necessary measuring apparatus, and joyously and lovingly proceeded together to the scene of their impending labours.

Having reached the ground, the brothers eyed the extensive piles of log that lay before them, for a few seconds, with looks of great satisfaction. Always friendly before, they were now ten times more so. Every better and tenderer feeling of their natures was consonantly acted upon by the very magnificent appearance of the *job*. They smiled sweetly in each other's faces, and murmured their happiness to one another, in accents as tender as those of a couple of turtle doves. But the work must be begun. They felt this, and commenced operations with such spirit that in a twinkling the first log was measured off—its dimensions taken, the younger Linn pulled a large red mass of something or other out of his pocket.

"What's that, Andrew?" said the elder Linn, eyeing the strange substance.

"A piece of red cauk to mark the logs wi'," replied Andrew, carelessly.

"Red cauk to mark the logs wi'?" said the elder, in a tone of slight displeasure, very slight however, scarce perceptible; "red cauk's no richt, man, ye canna see't a yard off. We'll tak' white, Andrew," and he pulled a large piece of the substance he alluded to out of *his* pocket.

"We'll do nae such thing, man," replied Andrew, a little impatiently, "white has nae grip. It rubs off wi' the least touch. We'll tak' the red, Jamie; it'll haud the longest."

"The red canna be seen a yard off, man, I tell ye, and 'll never do!" said the elder Linn sharply, and with pointed emphasis.

"The white has nae hauld!" exclaimed Andrew, with increasing testiness of manner.

"It'll do better than the red for a' that," said the elder brother, now really angry at the pertinacity of his junior.

"It'll do nae such thing," replied the latter, no less vexed at the obstinacy of the former. "I tell ye again, that the red hauds best. It'll staun baith wet and dry, and a gude rubbin to the bargain. I'm sure common sense micht show ye that."

"But it's no seen!" roared out the elder brother, now in a tremendous passion, "and what's the use o' a mark if it's no seen?"

"Ye're an ass, a d—d ass!" shouted Andrew, proceeding without further words to mark the log with the red chalk which he held in his hand, when he was collared by his brother.

"An ass?—you infernal idiot, you insolent rascal! Do you call me an ass? It's *you* that's the ass!" exclaimed the elder Pliny, shaking his brother violently while he spoke. "Let me see that piece o' red cauk oot o' your hands this instant," he added, making at the same time a desperate effort to obtain possession of the detested substance.

"I'll see you hanged first!" exclaimed Andrew, resisting stoutly, and in turn grasping his brother by the throat.

"But I *will* hae't," roared out Jamie; increasing his efforts to get hold of the piece of red chalk.

"But ye sha' na hae't!" bellowed out Andrew, still more and more fiercely resisting.

The consequence of these opposing sentiments and interests was a long and deadly struggle, in the course of which both got several severe falls: sometimes one being undermost, and sometimes the other. At length, the elder brother proved himself decidedly the superior in physical strength, by getting Andrew on his back right across the measured but still unmarked log, where he held him by the throat!—his heels touching the ground on one side

and the crown of his head touching it on the other. The position was a complete locker. Andrew could not budge an inch, and Pliny the elder perceiving his advantage, held him there with the most determined gripe.

Aware of the utter helplessness of his situation, Andrew made no attempt to regain his perpendicular, but lay quietly where he was. Under this seeming passiveness, however, there was a deep design. This design was neither more nor less than to take advantage of the smallest remissness on the part of the superincumbent—for Pliny the elder was reposing with his whole weight on Pliny the younger, as he lay doubled backwards across the log—and to extricate himself from his hold by one sudden and desperate jerk ; a proceeding in which he eventually succeeded at the expense only of one of the skirts of his coat, which remained in the hands of the elder Linn, after a vain attempt to counteract the vigorous and successful twist with which he conveyed his entire body to one side of the log, and the subsequent spring which restored him to his perpendicular.

On regaining his legs, Linn the younger made a ferocious leap at the throat of Linn the elder, and succeeded in canting *him* over the log, making his spine crack like the report of a pistol. With this feat, however, personal hostilities terminated between the belligerents—but it was only to renew the war in a new shape. Satisfied with having thrown his brother, Linn the younger did not follow up his advantage by keeping him down, but allowed him to get up again. On doing so, the elder Linn, appreciating the courtesy, did not again attack, but affecting an air of calm magnanimity, and assuming a corresponding attitude, said at intervals, as his excited condition and disturbed respiration would admit :

“Sir,—you’ll—repent—this infamous—conduct of yours. I’ll go directly, Sir, to Mr. Beveridge (the importer and proprietor of the timber) and tell him, Sir, of your rascally and unnatural conduct, and we’ll then see, Sir, whether he’ll have his logs marked with red chalk or with white ;” and he shook the fist in which he still held the substance of which he spoke, although it was now merely a handful of white powder, having been crushed into dust in the struggle.

“Whenever you choose, Sir,” said his brother, trying to imitate the elder’s coolness and dignity of manner ; “whenever you choose, Sir,” he said, shaking the lump of red chalk which he also still held in his hand, in his brother’s face ; “but when you go, I go along with you. Mark that. I’ll not allow you an opportunity of misrepresenting facts. I’m as willing as you can be to refer the matter to Mr. Beveridge ; but if he chooses white chalk to mark his timber wi’, I can tell ye it’s what he never did before :—I ken that.”

"Go to the deil wi' ye," said the elder brother, and he hurried away to put his threat of stating the case to Mr. Beveridge in execution.

Andrew, equally determined, followed him with his skirtless coat.

Mr. Beveridge was not within, but they were told where they would be likely to find him. It was a considerable distance, but they were resolved on seeing Mr. Beveridge, and to the place named they went. He had left just five minutes or so before they arrived. The person whom they saw, however, informed them that he had spoken of going to a certain other quarter of the town, and he had no doubt, if they went there, they would find him.

They did so, but Mr. Beveridge was *not* there.

The Linns now returned to Mr. Beveridge's house:—the elder Linn going before, and the younger behind; both as sulky as bears, and neither speaking a word to the other.

On arriving at Mr. Beveridge's house, they were told that that gentleman had gone down about an hour before to the timber-yard. He was now secure, and to the timber-yard the Linns immediately repaired. Be it observed, however, before we bring on the crisis of our tale, that the Linns had spent upwards of an hour in searching for Mr. Beveridge, which, with fully another consumed in the conflict we have recorded, had exhausted a "pretty considerable" portion of the morning, and yet not a single log had been marked off!

Oh, passion! thou blinder of reason! that steppest in between man and his purposes, and crossest the latter with thy arbitrary and bootless influence! what deep cause had these unfortunate North Britons to rue thy interposition! Why did it not occur, both to Pliny the elder and Pliny the younger, that, while they were debating the relative merits of white and red, the job itself which demanded the instrumentality of the "rival colours" was slipping through their fingers? Time and tide, it is proverbial, stay for no one; why should an exception be made in the instance of two pugnacious Scotchmen?

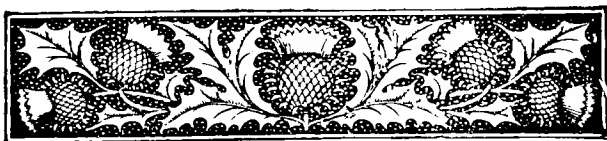
On reaching the timber-yard the Messrs. Linn found—found what? Why, Mr. Beveridge with two assistants busily employed in doing the work they should have done. Here was a denouement! Shortly did the full facts of the case burst upon the luckless brothers, and effectually cool their irritation. Adieu to the delicious prospect of a relishing breakfast, and still more savoury dinner! Adieu to the anticipation of an evening glass of whisky-toddy, enjoyed over a retrospect of the labours of the morning! Instead of these creature-comforts, enhanced as they would have been by all the force of a painful contrast, our heroes were doomed, again, both to dine and sup with *Duke Humphrey!*

It was eventually ascertained that some rival applicant for the measuring-work, instigated by combined feelings of jealousy and envy, had flitted, on that eventful morning, round the scene of action ; had witnessed—no doubt with infinite *goût*—the growing quarrel between the owners of the two chalks—watching minutely its progress, from the first insinuated dissent to the ultimate open brawl ; on the commencement of which the spectator had quietly decamped, and carried intelligence thereof to the proprietor of the timber.

Our readers will guess the sequel. It was in vain that the Messrs. Linn endeavoured to explain the reason of their dilatoriness, and the nature of their dispute to the matter-of-fact and business-like principal with whom they had to deal ; both indeed spoke at once, as if seeking to make up by clamour for the want of common sense ; but Mr. Beveridge cut short recrimination and appeal, by telling the incensed disputants to get clear of the ground, and not further interrupt the progress of that work which they were originally intended to expedite.

Jamie and Andrew, perceiving that the game was up, slunk off, hungry and discomfited, to reflect at leisure on the virtue of unanimity. The affair meanwhile got wind ; it was related by some as a sad, by others as a merry story ; but by one and all, ever after, the Linns were distinguished by the rather inharmonious *sobriquet* of the TWO CHALKS.





THE COQUETTE :

A TALE OF FASHIONABLE LIFE.



LADY CECILIA SELBORNE was seated at her toilet in a wrapping-gown, whilst her maid was labouring, not very successfully, to satisfy her fastidious taste in the arrangement of her long and luxuriant auburn tresses.

"My dear Cecilia," exclaimed Elinor, her cousin, as she entered the room, "are you aware that the carriage has been waiting this half hour, and that your father is out of all patience?"

"Of the latter circumstance I can have no doubt," returned Lady Cecilia, "whatever I might of the former. I had no idea it was so late. Ay, that's better, Smithson," she added, addressing her attendant; "a little more this way, and that side, I think, may do."

"Why, Cecy, have you really been all this time adorning for a B—— assize ball? You, who almost quarrel with me for bestowing a sprig of jessamine upon the natives!"

"And I will quarrel with you again for that, and for your ball-dress, Nelly. You will actually make the natives think that an assize-ball is as great an affair to you as to them. Oh! Smithson, Smithson, now you are spoiling all again!"

"Nay, trust me, coz, your hair looks as negligently arranged as your utmost contempt for B—— can desire."

"Yes, Nelly, and as unbecomingly; which is *more* than I desire."

"Will there be anyone in the party for whom you think that signifies?" asked Elinor.

"Do you not know the troops that have just succeeded to that odious —— regiment afford some who would not be discreditable dangles?"

"I was quite ignorant of that important circumstance. But I really think Smithson's last touch was perfection, and you look quite beautiful enough to kill all the not-discreditable portion of the regiment."

Lady Cecilia laughed reprovingly, as she said, "Nelly, Nelly, I shall never make anything of you. But I believe it will do now;" and she rose from her seat and proceeded to complete her attire.

"And who *are* these not-discreditable dangles, whom you think worth so much trouble, Cecy?" asked Elinor, as she assisted the maid in settling her cousin's dress.

"The colonel is one of the Ernewolds," was the answer.

"One of the Ernewolds?" repeated Elinor. "I thought old Lord Treswick had only the son who has been so long abroad."

"And you thought right, dear; but an Ernewold may do well enough to dance with, though he is only an earl's nephew. And this man is, moreover, a very distinguished officer, as I have heard."

By this time Lady Cecilia was ready, and the two cousins descended to the library, where the earl scolded his daughter, both for her want of punctuality, and her not being full-dressed after all.

"It would be so very late, papa, if I staid to improve my appearance," observed the young lady.

The remark produced the intended effect, and the trio immediately set out for B——; but during the greater part of the drive, the peer harangued his daughter upon the duty of treating country neighbours with proper respect, and of acquiring country popularity.

No artifice of dress, or lateness of arrival, was requisite to give effect to the entrance of the Selborne Abbey party into the B—— ball-room; but Lady Cecilia had judged well how to heighten that effect to the utmost. Miss Selborne might perhaps have only been remarked as the most elegant and fashionable girl in the room. But the decided half-dress of Lady Cecilia, for which she condescendingly apologised as having forgotten the hour and been unwilling to detain her father, combining with and enhancing her air of high fashion, necessarily caught every eye. Amongst others, it naturally attracted his for whom it had been principally designed. Colonel Ernewold requested an introduction, and solicited her hand for the first quadrille.

Without losing sight for an instant of that negligent superiority to the place and company, which her dress was intended to enforce, Lady Cecilia exerted herself to charm her partner, and when she did thus exert herself, it was seldom indeed that she failed of success. Ernewold was completely fascinated; and when he next sought the hand of Elinor, who—if inferior in beauty to her cousin, which might be a question, was certainly second to no other—he sought her merely as something belonging to Lady Cecilia. In fact, the two cousins strongly resembled

each other ; both were true English beauties, with brilliant complexions, blue eyes, a profusion of silky auburn hair, and finely formed persons. Both had also that indescribable air of high fashion, which those only depreciate who despair of acquiring it. In Lady Cecilia this air was enhanced by perfect self-confidence, and a considerable degree of levity. In Miss Selborne it was tempered by a slight shade of timidity, which would possibly have amounted to shyness, had not an early familiarity with the best society prevented the growth of so obsolete a feeling. Perhaps this difference between the fair cousins may be best explained by saying, that Lady Cecilia's education had been wholly committed to a fashionable French governess, and the best masters London could afford ; whilst Elinor had received hers chiefly from her parents, with the occasional assistance of expensive instructors in the lighter accomplishments of her sex.

Colonel Ernewold's conversation with his new partner consisted principally of the praises of her predecessor ; and the cordial warmth with which Elinor concurred in them, seemed too natural to excite a remark. At length his eulogiums embraced the elegant simplicity of her appearance, the unaffected good-nature that had induced her to sacrifice the care of her dress to the fear of detaining her father and cousin,—and Elinor's utmost efforts failed wholly to suppress the arch smile that dimpled about the corners of her pretty mouth, as she quietly observed, " Few persons have so little occasion to think of dress as Cecilia."

Ernewold fixed a scrutinising look upon the lurking smile, and thought of the trite maxim, that admiration of one woman is seldom agreeable to another ; whilst, in Elinor's mind, as she noticed that look, arose the painful idea, " He thinks me envious of Cecilia ;" and the smile was supplanted by an involuntary but equally irrepressible sigh.

The evolutions of the quadrille now interrupted the conversation. These Elinor performed, as she always did, gracefully and correctly, but without display ; and the colonel, as he handed her to her place again, remarked, " You are fonder of dancing than Lady Cecilia." Her ladyship, it should be observed, merely walked the figure, occasionally executing a few difficult steps with transcendent skill and precision.

" For its own sake, perhaps I may be," she answered : and as he made no immediate rejoinder, added, with another irrepressible smile, " but I fancy I need not tell you, that my cousin is a beautiful dancer."

From this evening Colonel Ernewold was a constant visitor at Selborne Abbey ; and, although Lady Cecilia was evidently the magnet that attracted him, she did not so completely monopolise

his attentions, but that he became a welcome guest to the whole family. He was a man of education, and a soldier who had seen much service. His conversation was diversified, entertaining, and instructive. In the pleasures it afforded, Lady Cecilia seemed generously willing to permit her father and cousin to share,—as, whilst her deepening colour, and now sparkling, now swimming eye, spoke all her tongue denied, and she exerted her various powers of pleasing to secure her hold of her conquest,—she appeared in no haste to receive any more explicit acknowledgment of her victory than that with which the silent eloquence of passion gratified her heart or her vanity.

The share usually taken in the conversation by Elinor showed, without the slightest degree of pretension, a high tone of feeling, a playful fancy, a strong intellect, and a mind stored with information; and it often attracted Ernewold's attention to her, though it could not for an instant balance or weaken Lady Cecilia's superior powers of fascination. Sometimes, too, he fancied that Elinor's colour deepened as much as her cousin's at his approach; but of this it was difficult to judge; and her eyes, always fixed upon her book, her work, or her drawing, were veiled from observation by their long lashes, until raised to receive and return his greeting with a sweet and cordial smile.

One morning, the cousins being alone, Elinor, after a long silence, looked up from her drawing to ask "Cecilia, what do you mean to do with this not-disagreeable dangler, as you call him?"

"Do with him, child? Why, just what you have allowed that he is fittest for;—dangle him *au possible*," was the laughing answer.

"I allowed no such thing," returned Elinor; "and I very much doubt his proving a *tame* dangler."

"So much the better, Nelly. Tame is synonymous with stupid."

"But how is it to end, Cecy? Are you so confident in your skill, as to be in no danger of entangling *yourself*?"

"I am, Miss Elinor. I can enjoy the conversation of an agreeable man, without seeking to know whether he be able to keep a wife, and a coach and four."

"If you would but be serious for five minutes, Cecilia," observed Elinor, shaking her head with something between a smile and a sigh.

"Serious? So I will in time and season, child. If that *end* of which you think so much, ever should befall me, I'll be solemnity personified. But not about a pleasant partner at a county town ball, or in a country ride."

"*Tant va la cruche a l'eau*; you know the rest, Cecy; and French covers the vulgarity, even of proverbs, I believe."

"What ! dealing out the saws of old experience, Nelly dear ?" rejoined Lady Cecilia. "But never fear, pet ; it shall have its colonel when I have done with him, and very little the worse for wear."

"Your ladyship is lavishly generous," retorted Elinor, blushing and laughing ; "but you will please to recollect, that the intended receiver may have some choice touching such gifts, as well as the intended giver."

"As for the receiver, my discreet coz," replied Lady Cecilia, "before you can persuade me of your dislike to the gift, you must learn to silence the eloquence of that pure blood of yours."

The dialogue just detailed may suffice to give an idea of the state of affairs at Selborne Abbey ; a state in which, with trifling varieties, they remained, until the appearance of a new character upon the stage materially affected the relative positions and proceedings of the personages of our tale.

The colonel, as he was taking his leave one evening, said, "I must deny myself the enjoyment of Selborne Abbey society for some days, unless Lady Cecilia and Lord Shuckborough will permit me to bring a friend with me, for I expect a visitor to-morrow."

"Any friend of yours, Colonel Ernewold, must be welcome," replied the earl, with grave courtesy ; while his daughter gaily exclaimed, "A flirt for Elinor !—Oh, by all means ; it will save you the immense labour of trying to divide yourself between two *exigeante* damsels."

"The most considerate of all earthly cousins are you, Cecilia, beyond dispute," returned Elinor. "But a flirt is not actually essential to my existence."

It was not with his wonted ease that the colonel said : "It is fortunate for our sex that all ladies do not hold us quite so cheaply as Miss Selborne. However, I must try to avenge our cause by deputy, and never will I forgive Corringham if he does not teach my Lady Disdain to appreciate flirts more highly."

"Corryngham?" exclaimed Lord Shuckborough and his daughter, simultaneously.—"Is *he* in England?"

"He is just landed, and writes me word he will spend a few days with me on his way home."

"Quite recovered, I hope?" enquired the earl.

"So he tells me," returned the colonel.

"We shall be delighted to see him, and I rely upon your bringing him to dinner to-morrow, colonel," resumed the stately peer. His visitor bowed assent and departed.

The next day Colonel Ernewold presented Lord Corringham at Selborne Abbey ; and need it be said that the new comer was not assigned to Miss Selborne,—as her flirt was not made over to *her* care and attentions ! That on the contrary, Lady

Cecilia instantly devoted all her powers and talents to his entertainment. Was this the effect of simple politeness to a stranger?—or of obedience to her father's injunctions? Or, notwithstanding her professions of being no establishment-hunter, of enjoying the conversation of an agreeable man without reference to his merits as *un parti*, was her ladyship fully sensible of the advantages of marrying the heir of a wealthy earldom? Did she begin to reflect that, however unbounded the power she enjoyed over her father's establishment, she might not be likely to rule her brother's with quite so absolute a sway? Gentle reader, these are captious queries, implicating a fair lady's character for consistency, and must not be rashly answered. The sequel of the story will possibly afford their solution. Objectionable, however, as such interrogatories may be, they presented themselves to our friend the colonel's mind, and that so urgently, as to influence his conversation with Elinor, in whose gentleness he now began habitually to seek solace.

"Does Miss Selborne," he enquired, in an under voice, "admire the disinterestedness, or laugh at the simplicity, of an old war-worn soldier, who has so frankly contributed to supplant himself?"

"Not exactly either," returned Elinor, smiling, "since she is not quite aware of the fact."

"It is only the way of the world," he resumed, without replying to her propitiatory disclaimer; "and I might have remembered from my school-boy lessons, that arms must give place to robes. Yet, I did not quite think that Lady Cecilia——"

"Nay, but colonel, recollect; Lord Corringham is a stranger guest, and as such, entitled to attentions, which, if paid to you, *l'ami de la maison*, now almost *l'enfant de la maison*, would be ridiculous."

A pause of a few minutes ensued, during which both interlocutors were occupied in observing the animation displayed by the young and lovely hostess in her conversation with this "stranger guest." At length Ernewold renewed the dialogue, with increased bitterness of tone.

"And do the attentions due to a stranger include the display of every charm, the exhibition of every power of fascination, the utter forgetfulness of every other visitor?"

"Colonel Ernewold," said Elinor, more gravely, "Cecilia has from her infancy been accustomed to universal admiration, and it has become as essential to her existence as the air she breathes."

Colonel Ernewold looked earnestly at his companion, and the mistrust he had conceived on the evening of his first introduction to the fair cousins recurred to his mind. He assumed that air of conventional gallantry so well described by the French

term *bannale*, and said, "I am afraid I shall give Miss Selborne a very poor idea of army gallantry, for this is, I believe, the second time I have been guilty of that solecism in good manners, the entertaining one lady with the merits or demerits of another."

Elinor was deeply wounded. To be altogether overlooked, in his admiration of her more brilliant cousin, even by the man of whom, despite her best endeavours, she thought too much for her own happiness, she had borne. But to be despised by him as meanly envious of superior attractions—that she could not bear. She made a strong exertion to command her agitation, and with a faint smile returned, "At whatever hazard to the reputation of the whole British army, I must not, I will not, suffer you to change the subject of our conversation at this moment. Could I do so, immediately after making a remark disparaging to Cecilia, I should indeed deserve the bad opinion that I believe you have just formed of me."

He attempted a vague disclaimer, and asked some idle questions. Without attending to either, she went on with growing earnestness :

"I must not tell you of Cecilia's only fault, without adding, that she possesses not merely every charm—that you know as well as I do—but every excellence of head and heart, to counter-balance it; and if that fault dwells too constantly in my thoughts, it is not from jealousy : that I cannot feel, having no ambition such as hers, to produce either jealousy or rivalry; but because I tremble for its consequences to her own happiness.

"Colonel Ernewold, I am convinced that no strength of affection will ever wholly supersede her thirst for admiration; and he who aspires to Cecilia's regard, must make up his mind to rest content with the certainty of possessing her invaluable heart, and quietly see her exert all her powers of captivation to allure every fresh insect tempted to scorch its wings in the dazzling flame. And now," she added in a lighter tone, "we will talk of whatever you please."

Ernewold shook his head, muttering half to himself, yet not inaudibly, "Corringham is not one of the insects who will burn his wings;"—and then readily following Elinor's lead, answered her enquiries respecting foreign lands and past times, till he almost forgot that his delighted and intelligent auditress was not her whose attention he most desired to fix.

The next morning, as the two lovely cousins sat engaged in their several occupations, the one abruptly asked the other, "Nelly, what in the world were the colonel and you discussing so earnestly last night?"

"Every thing in the world, my good coz, and a few things besides."

"Two of those latter things, I presume," rejoined the fair querist, "being the Lord Viscount Corringham and the Lady Cecilia Selborne." She paused for an answer; but receiving none beyond a nod and a smile, went on: "I suppose Ernewold was very angry, poor fellow?"

"Of course, Cecilia," said Elinor, gravely, "he could not be pleased to see another usurp privileges you had taught him to consider as his own."

"Taught him, Nelly? Suffered him, you mean."

"Hum! A nice distinction, Cecy."

"A correct one, Nelly. I cannot help the fancies a man may take into his head. But if I had *taught* the creature to consider these privileges his, as you phrase it, it would be too late for me to follow your advice, my sage coz, as I mean to do."

"Follow my advice? In what, pray?"

"In not flirting further with any man who would not be a suitable *parti*."

"Indeed! Was that my advice?"

"Your rule, as I understood it. And in that point of view you have no objection to the Lord Viscount Corringham, I presume?"

"None, Cecy, except that I understood from Colonel Ernewold he is no marrying man."

"No marrying man!" retorted the spoiled beauty. "Lord help us, child! and do you and Colonel Ernewold fancy Cecilia Selborne has no chance of any husband who does not go about the world like the poor youth of

"Ballynocracy,

Who wanted a wife to make him un-ai-sy?"

And she sang with burlesque pathos the well-known line of Alley Croaker.

Elinor laughed and shook her head, her frequent return to her cousin's fallacious justifications of her own conduct;—then asked, "Is not this Lord Corringham a notorious man of gallantry?"

"The fitter that I should avenge the wrongs of my sex, Nelly, by bringing him to my feet in despair."

"And then?" asked Elinor.

"And then reject him in punishment of his manifold sins and offences, or confirm his repentance and reformation by accepting him, just as I find myself in the humour to carry a knapsack, or to repent in my turn, in a coach and six."

To this rhapsody Elinor made no answer, and Cecilia archly asked, "Are you bent upon my marrying Ernewold *coute qui coute*, Nelly?"

"I am bent upon your knowing your own mind, Cecy."

"Oh! that I do perfectly; and it is, to drag viscounts and colonels, profligates and marrying men, at my chariot wheels."

In this altered state, affairs continued for some time, during which Lord Corringham prolonged his visit to his military kinsman. Colonel Ernewold did not cease to watch his flirtation with Lady Cecilia, and to remark upon it in his conversations with Elinor; but the bitterness with which he had first done so gradually disappeared, and could his hearer have felt disposed to criticise anything in an intercourse so delightful to her, the fault she might have found would have been that he seemed to look upon the parties engaged in that flirtation as a couple of gladiators, exhibiting their "nice fence and active practice" solely for his entertainment, without the least interest in the event of the contest. Something of this hardly conscious feeling had been perceptible one day in her language; and the impression it made upon her auditor will appear from the dialogue that took place between the male cousins, as the colonel drove his noble visitor home to his quarters. He asked pretty nearly in the words Elinor had previously used with respect to himself—

"How is all this to end, Corringham? I hope you do not intend to add Lady Cecilia's broken heart to your already innumerable amorous trophies?"

"Lady Cecilia Selborne's broken heart!" ejaculated his noble companion, with a burst of laughter that would have injured his reputation in the eyes of Lord Chesterfield. "Faith, that is too good! Lady Cecilia Selborne's broken heart!"

"She may deserve to be jilted in her turn," resumed Ernewold gravely. "I will not dispute that; but as I introduced you at the Abbey, Corringham, for my credit's sake——"

The viscount interrupted him: "My most scrupulous colonel, if your credit remains unimpeached until Cecilia Selborne's heart is broken, yours will indeed be an immaculate career! Her heart broken!"—he went on, intermixing his words with peals of merriment. "This is the first time I ever heard that any naturalist even suspected the existence of a heart in the coquette *genus*."

"A coquette she certainly is," observed the colonel, with a sigh; "but her thousand charms, and excellencies——"

"Ay, indeed! Are you so well acquainted with her charms and excellencies? Why then I suspect that a certain gallant officer, more experienced in the field of Mars than of Venus, as the newspapers would elegantly express it, is infinitely indebted to his noble, but calumniated relation, for coming to reveal the speck, which, in sentimental eyes, should mar all the beauties."

Colonel Ernewold made no answer, and after a short pause,

Lord Corringham resumed. "Silent, Ernewold? Nay, then the business is serious indeed. But, my dear fellow, this Lady Cecilia is no heiress, I think. Lots of school-boy brothers, has she not? You have not fortune enough to marry a poorly portioned girl, even if she were as much attached to you as Lady Cecilia seems to have persuaded you she was before Cæsar Corringham interposed with his *veni, vidi, vici*."

"Corryingham, the woman who is content to live on my income, and follow the regiment for my sake, will always have portion enough for me."

"Doubtless, my good Amadis, doubtless; but Lady Cecilia Selborne, take my word for it, will never be that woman. Another Selborne, indeed, I suspect, there may be, who would willingly starve with you, were your income an ensign's pay, and follow your regiment, though she had to tramp after it on foot."

Again Colonel Ernewold made no answer; and again Lord Corringham, casting his momentary seriousness aside, began to divert himself with repeating, "Break Lady Cecilia Selborne's heart! Ha! ha! ha! ha!"

If this discussion produced any effect upon the disputants, that effect certainly was not to diminish their assiduity in visiting at the Abbey, or to check Colonel Ernewold's eagerness in seeking Elinor's society, in which he appeared daily to discover new charms. Neither was any alteration visible in the style of incense offered up by Lord Corringham at Lady Cecilia's shrine.

At Selborne Abbey, therefore, all was harmony and satisfaction. Lord Shuckborough took especial care not to interrupt proceedings that seemed to promise suitable establishments for his daughter and niece; and those damsels themselves appeared to be perfectly happy. Appeared? One *was* so. Elinor had not a wish ungratified, whilst she watched the gradual change taking place in the colonel's feelings with regard to Cecilia and herself; and if a painful recollection of Lord Corringham's character for gallantry sometimes disturbed her with a fear for her cousin's prospects, she was in no mood to be suspicious of a relation of Ernewold's, or one whose arrival had been fraught with such felicity to herself; and she was therefore easily satisfied with the lady's own assurances of her perfect confidence in the *ci-devant* gay Lothario.

But did Lady Cecilia really feel all the confidence she expressed? Was *she* likewise as happy as she appeared? She tried to believe it. Nothing could be more devoted than this not-marrying man's attentions; nothing more delicate than his flattery. He was prolonging his stay at B. wholly upon her account,—so much he had given her plainly to understand, when he had spoken of the duties, of the imperious claims, he was disregard-

ing, from the impossibility of tearing himself away from the neighbourhood. And if an unpleasant consciousness did at times obtrude itself upon her, that this was the nearest approach he had ever made to anything like speaking out, she consoled herself with the reflection, that a professed not-marrying-man must naturally hesitate longer than another, ere taking the irrevocable step; and she only exerted herself the more to secure so splendid a triumph; whilst the worst suspicion she ever admitted, even to reject it, was, that the imperious claim his lordship had alluded to, was the entanglement of some former illicit attachment, which he must needs disentangle, or break through, prior to thinking of marriage. Need it be added, that this suspicion only stimulated Cecilia's endeavours to captivate?

But there was a further drawback to her ladyship's happiness, which she yet less avowed to herself, and never would have acknowledged to another. She sedulously observed the intercourse between her discarded admirer and her cousin. At first she was gratified by the conviction that Ernewold sought Elinor merely to complain of her conduct. But latterly she perceived that the colonel's eyes dwelt less upon herself, and more upon her cousin. And the irksome apprehension that he might have broken her chains, was embittered by an involuntary sense of the superiority in all, save rank and fortune, of the captive she was losing, perhaps had already lost, to the rival for whom she had slighted him.

At length the long-deferred day of Lord Corringham's departure came, and he managed it with the skill that had characterised the whole of his intercourse with Cecilia. A country party was assembled at Selborne Abbey, necessarily compelling her to divide her attentions; but, ere the company broke up, he whispered in her fluttered ear—

"Pity me, for the hours of happiness are past! I may no longer brave those imperative claims that, during so many delicious days, have vainly summoned me hence."

Cecilia changed colour, and her lips quivered between the pain of these tidings, and the expectation that the moment of parting would be that of explanation. She had no wish to conceal her encouraging emotion from him who caused it, and fault-teringly asked, "Are you then really going?"

The answer was comprised in the single ejaculation, "Alas!"

"And soon?" again asked Lady Cecilia.

"Now! Even now!"

"Now!" she more faintly reiterated.

"I ought to have gone this morning, but I could not sacrifice these last moments of enjoyment. I ordered the carriage hither, and it waits—has long been waiting."

Agitated by conflicting hopes and fears of what was to follow,

shrinking with maiden delicacy from saying too much, and dreading by an unseasonable word to check the declaration she expected, Lady Cecilia remained silent, merely bending her head in acknowledgment of the compliment. The viscount, after a brief pause as if waiting for an answer, resumed—

“To me the interval will seem an eternity—yet be in fact but a few weeks. The season will bring you to town, and then I may hope——” The listener trembled and coloured more deeply: but without appearing to notice her emotion, Corringham went on, after a momentary hesitation, “I may hope to—present myself in Grosvenor Square, may I not?”

Lady Cecilia could scarcely conceal her disappointment, though her pride enabled her to answer in a steady voice, “We must always be happy to see Lord Corringham.”

“Millions of thanks and as many farewells!” he exclaimed, as he pressed her hand fervently, and rising from her side, addressed himself to take leave of his noble host. Lord Shuckborough stood confounded, when he heard that his intended son-in-law was leaving the neighbourhood without a word concerning any serious intentions, without any seeming purpose of further intercourse till they should meet in town. But a room full of company was no place for explanations, and in fact, before the peer had sufficiently collected his faculties to consider how he should act, the noble commoner had shaken hands with Miss Selborne, slapped Colonel Ernewold on the shoulder, with the words “*Au revoir* in town,” sprung into his travelling carriage, and driven off at the utmost speed of four post horses.

But no human eye might be permitted to behold the mortification of Lady Cecilia Selborne; and so perfectly did she command herself, so gracefully and so cheerfully did she continue to play the hostess, that her father even mistook matters, and imagined, until undeceived, that a perfect understanding existed between the young people.

On the morrow, however, a new annoyance awaited the coquette, for which, it being unprecedented in her experience, she was altogether unprepared. Colonel Ernewold returned, as formerly, unaccompanied, but, not as formerly, he now came to devote himself wholly to the gentle Elinor. Lady Cecilia saw herself neglected for her cousin, and found such neglect intolerable. It was not that she would allow no one a husband or a lover but herself; on the contrary, from the time of her perceiving Elinor’s growing attachment, she had made up her mind that the colonel should one day or other be her cousin’s. But then she had intended this to be brought about rather by her own will, than by Elinor’s charms; to be preceded by her own marriage, or at least by her positive rejection of the colonel’s addresses, in short, by his actual despair with regard to herself;

and as yet, though he might reasonably enough be very angry with her, he had no just cause for despair. Accordingly, a little consideration satisfied Lady Cecilia that Colonel Ernewold, under the influence of excessive anger, was deceiving poor Elinor, and probably himself likewise ; an evil which should not be suffered to continue.

But in vain did the accomplished coquette throw out the most powerful lures—Ernewold saw them as though he saw them not. Every courtesy due to the mistress of the mansion in which he was so hospitably entertained, every respectful or kindly attention due to the beloved relation of the object of his affections, he rendered to Lady Cecilia ; but beyond this he would not be drawn ; and the mortified beauty was at length obliged to confess to herself, what all others had long seen, that save as Elinor's kinswoman, she was now nothing to the inflexible soldier. To be thus the mere spectatress of another's wooing, was not existence ; and she looked around in quest of some tolerable substitute for the present deserter, and the absentee admirer.

None immediately offered, save a certain Augustus Jackson, Esquire, the vulgar dashing son and heir of a lately deceased industrious and wealthy wholesale hosier. Augustus Jackson had been destined, by the ambitious dealer in stockings, even from his birth (as is indicated by the incongruity of his Christian with his surname) to soar a flight far above all past Jacksons whom the world had ever known ; and never was filial obedience more beautifully displayed, than in the zeal wherewith the dutiful Augustus laboured to fulfil these parental aspirations.

Upon this, as she fancied, City Cymon, Lady Cecilia, in the actual dearth of any other coat and waistcoat bearing animal to pay her those attentions without which she could no longer exist, resolved to bestow so much encouragement as should prove requisite to convert him into a sort of stop-gap flirt in the absence of better. Her purpose was quickly effected ; but whether she found her vivified Cymon more troublesome, or simply less amusing, than she had anticipated, certain it is that in the very height of the flirtation (which had excited many ill-natured comments), she urged an unprecedentedly early removal to Grosvenor Square, alleging as her reason the preparations requisite for Elinor's marriage—Colonel Ernewold having about this time solicited Miss Selborne's hand, and obtained Lord Shuckborough's courteous confirmation of the consent he had previously read in her blushing although silent delight.

In London Lady Cecilia, as she had probably anticipated, met Lord Corringham, and their rural intimacy was renewed. But if their intercourse bore the same character as in the country, it was different in one important respect, its frequency ; and Lady

Cecilia was not perfectly at her ease. That he admired her—sincerely, fervently admired her—was self-evident ; his manner even more than his language proved it whenever they were together, and after every absence his lamentations of the imperative engagements of business or duty that kept him away, might have satisfied the most distrustful ; and Cecilia was anything but distrustful of the power of her own charms. Not even in the secret council of her heart did she confess a doubt, a fear of the rivalry of a certain Mrs. Delraine (though the world talked much of his successful admiration of that lady), or a suspicion that the anti-matrimonialism of this finest of fine men might, after all, prove invincibly stubborn. But she did acknowledge the necessity of exerting all her power of fascination, to compel him to surrender at discretion ; and she was not sorry, during these efforts, to be freed from the enquiring eye of the observant Elinor, who had declined going into public during the preparations for her marriage—an awful crisis to the female who is about to place her whole futurity in the hands of a fallible fellow-creature, however happy be the auspices under which she weds.

Excited, agitated perhaps, but certainly not unhappy, Lady Cecilia, chaperoned by her aunt, Lady Sophia Horwood, was seated in her opera-box, looking, ay, and talking delightfully with all her might (for Lord Corringham had joined her), when her eye, as it glanced over the pit, caught the face and figure of Augustus Jackson. She was petrified—but nevertheless, too practised a fine lady to be easily disconcerted, she swiftly and skilfully glanced her unobservant eye onward, fixing it for some minutes intently upon the stage ; then drawing back within her box, she turned half round to devote herself more entirely than before to the task of captivating Lord Corringham. But she was not long permitted to triumph in the imagined success of her *manœuvre*. Lady Sophia interrupted a delightful conversation, by tapping her on the arm with her fan, and asking, “Is it possible all that bowing and nodding should be addressed, as it seems to be, to our box ? The person is quite a stranger to me. Do you know anything of him, Cecilia ?”

“A great deal too much, Ma’am, unluckily,” replied the young lady. “I am doing my best not to see him.”

The question and answer drew Lord Corringham’s attention to the subject, and leaning forward, he exclaimed with a subdued laugh, “Why, is not that your B—— neighbour of quizzical fame, Augustus Jackson, Esquire ?”

A smile and a nod conveyed Lady Cecilia’s assent, while her aunt resumed : “A country neighbour ! My dear Cecilia, you, who know how particular my brother is about all those people, how can you be so rude to any of them ?”

"My dear aunt, what rudeness is there in not happening to see any body?"

"But, Cecilia, he must be aware that you *will* not see him. Besides, he is making himself and us objects of universal observation."

"Nay, rather than be associated with him in any way, I *will* see him," returned Cecilia; and looking towards her now unwelcome admirer, she made him a formal obeisance. Then abruptly turning to Lord Corringham, she observed, "My father took so much notice of the creature after you left us, and obliged me to be so civil to him, that he is become infinitely more disagreeable than ever."

A half-suppressed smile played about Corringham's lips, and he had not yet replied to this deprecatory speech, when the box-door was thrown open, and whilst the fair proprietress's heart died within her, Jackson entered, exclaiming with outstretched hand, "Ah! Lady Cecilia! How do? How do?"

Lady Cecilia did not extend an answering hand; but then, both hands were so evidently preoccupied by her muff, her fan, her opera-glass, and her pocket-handkerchief, that the new comer saw no intended slight, and contenting himself with the somewhat distant bow, he went on: "Now this is what I call knowing what one's about. Not two hours in town, and here I am already basking in the sunshine of Lady Cecilia's smiles."

"Are you so lately arrived?" asked Lady Cecilia, coldly enough; and at the same time leaning forward in her box to address her next-door neighbour, whom she engaged in conversation.

Jackson was for an instant disconcerted, and again a very perceptible smile relaxed Corringham's features. But the lord of Hazlewood mansion and estate could not imagine such a possibility as a wish to avoid him, and was moreover accustomed to be occasionally neglected, when persons entitled to claim Lady Cecilia's attention had visited at Selborne Abbey. Accordingly, he concluded that she was now thus imperatively called away, and his awkward feelings with regard to lords and ladies having evaporated in his recent intimacy with the Selborne family, he addressed Lord Corringham in a familiar tone, and with a sly wink at the stately and somewhat old-fashioned Lady Sophia, "I say, my lord, who is the old one?"

Lord Corringham dropped the lids over his eyes, and continued to play with his watch-chain, as if totally unconscious of the existence of his neighbour. Jackson's shyness was, however, as has been observed, no more; and he resumed in a louder tone, "I say, my lord——"

But Lady Sophia, to whom a disturbance of the audience proceeding from her box was actual death, now placed her fore-

finger upon her lips, and fixing her reproving eyes upon the speaker, interrupted him with a solemnly authoritative "Hush!"

Jackson was for the moment silenced, and Lord Corringham, giving her a friendly nod, rose and left the box. When Cecilia turned round from her colloquy, she saw him at a distance, leaning upon the back of Mrs. Delraine's chair.

The next day as the two cousins, on horseback and escorted by Ernewold, turned into Park Lane, they were joined by Lord Corringham, who laughingly exclaimed, "Give you joy, Lady Cecilia, give you joy of that Arcadian Celadon of yours! Why, with such a dangler you will be the wonder of the park, and the envy of every circle. Do you take him out?"

"Mercy, mercy, Lord Corringham!" returned the lady, with a laugh far less hearty. "It is hard enough that papa should require me to woo every boor and bore in the county, in order to secure Selborne's future election, without my friends quizzing my sufferings."

"It is hard, I confess;" returned he. "And so much the harder, as you cannot expect that any human friendship, in these enlightened days, should extend to such a pitch of self-immolation as to assist you in bearing your fate." As he spoke, a movement of his head pointed out Jackson, who was galloping towards them—and with a nod he turned his horse, and cantered off in the opposite direction.

Lady Cecilia now could not stir out without encountering Augustus Jackson; and though she speedily contrived to let him know that country intimacy by no means implied even London acquaintanceship, she did not succeed in freeing herself from his importunities, however she might deprive her brother of his interest. When the aspiring upstart, in fact, was really convinced that the titled coquette had jilted him, he saw that he could not more effectively revenge himself, than by assuming the deportment of a favoured lover, and for this amiable purpose he pursued her steps more assiduously than he might perhaps have done, had his object been merely to obtain a "Lady Cecilia" for his wife.

This persecution was, however, for some days confined to the mornings, Jackson not enjoying the *entrée* at those houses where his victim spent her evenings. But as the Saturday drew near, Cecilia thought with dismay of her defenceless condition at the opera; and at the breakfast-table on Saturday morning, she was actually meditating giving it up, for that night at least, and propitiating her father by offering her box to some of the country people, when her cogitations were interrupted by the earl, who suddenly looked up from his newspaper with the exclamation, "Cecilia, why what the d—! is this? What have you been doing with Corringham, since we have been in town?"

"Doing with Corringham? I do not understand you, papa."

"Listen, child, does not this mean him?" And his lordship read as follows:—

"We regret to hear that the double flirtation of a certain courtesy-viscount has ended, as the friends of the two ladies must always have feared—the noble spinster is left to sigh alone, whilst the wedded dame has fallen before the arts of the gay Lothario of the day."

The penetrating reader need hardly be told that Lady Cecilia was by no means deeply in love with Lord Corringham, to whom in her secret heart she indisputably preferred Col. Ernewold. She was, nevertheless, fully sensible to the great powers of captivation possessed by the former, and had besides of late so accustomed herself to consider him as her future husband, that as such she had conceived a species of conjugal attachment to him; but far more than her heart, her pride was interested in accomplishing what she had undertaken, namely, the conversion of the most decidedly not-marrying-man in England, into an humble petitioner for her hand. Her hopes were overthrown—her feelings, of all kinds, wounded—as she listened to a statement too clear to be mistaken, too probable (despite her previous self-delusion) to be doubted: and she sat confounded and speechless long after her father had ceased reading.

But Elinor, whose heart, overflowing with happy love, lent its own emotions to her coquettish cousin, and who had seen nothing of the recent proceedings of her betrothed lover's noble kinsman, eagerly exclaimed: "Oh, my dear uncle, how can you attach any importance to newspaper scandal? It is impossible! And here comes Ernest," she continued, with a still brighter blush, as the music of the colonel's well-known knock greeted her ear, "to vindicate his cousin. Ernest, there is not a word of truth in that vile paragraph, is there?"—And, in the warmth of her sympathy for Cecilia, forgetting the shrinking delicacy of her own nature, she flew with outstretched hands to meet Ernewold as he entered the apartment.

"Would there were not, dearest!" he replied; "but, alas! it is all too true! I have this moment left my poor uncle, whose dearest hopes are thus cruelly, and, I fear, permanently blighted. I am here only to tell you that I must go—I must endeavour to be beforehand with Delaine in tracing the fugitives."

"You, Ernest! and why? What good can you hope to do now?"

"Good—none, I fear; but I may, perhaps, prevent more evil. Delaine scorns the idea of legal satisfaction for such an injury; and I would fain prevent bloodshed; prevent all the evils impending over Corringham—if it be still possible."

Cecilia slightly shuddered at these words, and Elinor fer-

vently exclaimed, "Bloodshed ! Oh, yes, go ! go ! Fly, dear Ernest !"

Lord Shuckborough, however, more considerately observed, "Lord Corringham has deliberately chosen the part of guilt, and on his own head be the consequences. I do not see why a man upon the point of marriage, and thence in a manner pledged to decorous conduct, should involve himself."

"My dear uncle," interposed Elinor, "you do not consider Lord Corringham's life is, perhaps, at stake."

Lady Cecilia now looked up for the first time, and the colour returned to her cheek as she said, with a bitter smile, "Oh, yes, Elinor, my father *does* consider. His niece's bridegroom is the next heir."

"Cecilia !" burst from the lips of all present, in tones varied according to the different feelings of the parties.

"*You* had not considered *it*, Elinor, that I well know ; and if Ernewold had, the consideration has not influenced his conduct."

Lady Cecilia spoke calmly and coldly, and left the room as she did so. But her sarcasm was of use. Lord Shuckborough ceased to oppose his intended nephew's purpose, and Colonel Ernewold immediately took his leave.

Why should we dwell on the painful details of guilt, and its fatal consequences ? Suffice it to say, that the utmost zeal of kindly and kindred affection was unable to recover the advantage that an earlier knowledge of his wrongs had given to the injured, the exasperated, the vindictive husband. Ernewold only reached Calais, whither he traced the criminal lovers, to find the duel he apprehended already fought, Corringham writhing under the agony of a mortal wound, the wretched woman who had

"given
Her peace on earth, her hopes of heaven "

for him, in convulsions by his side, heightening his sufferings by her shrieks of despair, and Colonel Delraine in a French prison.

All that could now be done, Ernewold did. He removed Mrs. Delraine from the chamber of death ; he soothed Corringham's pangs, mental and physical—prevailing upon him to sign a statement that exonerated, and procured the liberation of his antagonist ; and bound himself both to obtain for the forlorn victim of his kinsman's arts a provision from Lord Treswick, and to negotiate her reconciliation with, and pardon from, her own family.

The marriage of Colonel Ernewold and Elinor Selborne was

necessarily delayed, first by Lord Corringham's death, and then by Lord Treswick's consequent grief and serious illness ; and Lady Cecilia, in the depth of her various mortifications, gladly made the peculiarity of her cousin's situation an excuse for retiring with her to Selborne Abbey, and spending the remaining season of London gaiety in profound solitude.

It was as Earl of Treswick that Ernewold received the hand of his Elinor ; and whatever her bridesmaid, Lady Cecilia, might feel, her countenance and deportment showed nothing but sympathy in her friend and kinswoman's happiness.

Did Lady Cecilia continue to bury the pangs of her well-merited disappointment in solitude ? Did she buy off the title of *jilt* by becoming the mistress of Hazlewood House ? Or is she again fluttering the brightest butterfly of the London parterre, consoling herself with the inebriating incense of general admiration for the want of one devoted heart ? The solution of these questions, gentle reader, must be left to thine own sagacity. Look round amidst the Lady Cecílias of thine acquaintance, titled and untitled, and satisfy thyself whether a thorough coquette be capable of reformation.





THE SPIRIT OF THE FOUNTAIN.

AN OLD ENGLISH LEGEND.

BY J. S. COYNE.

"She sang of love—and o'er her lyre
The rosy rays of evening fell."

IN the warm light of an autumnal sunset, streaming through the thick foliage of a broad-leaved clematis that festooned the open window of a room overlooking one of those richly varied landscapes which England only can boast, sat two children of earth—beautiful as the first-born pair, and like them alone in the midst of the world, for they lived but for each other; and the smile that wreathed the lips of one was reflected in the eyes of his partner. They were lovers, not in the common acceptance of the word, but in the all-absorbing influence of a passion that had become a portion of their existence.

Teresa, for that was the maiden's name, occasionally struck with playful gaiety a few chords upon a lute which hung upon her arm, at times accompanying its music with the sweet melody of her voice. Arthur, her betrothed, reclined on a cushion at her feet.

"Teresa," whispered the youth, gazing passionately upwards into that beautiful face which bent so closely towards his, as almost to mingle her silken tresses with the thick curls which shadowed his brow; "Teresa, that sweet strain which you sang me last night haunts my imagination, its mournful cadences still dwell upon my ear; will you sing it once more?"

"'Tis but the fragment of an old ballad, Arthur, but if your fancy be pleased with such sad music, you shall hear it again. It is called 'The Spirit's Song.'"

Preluding the strain with a simple symphony, she commenced.

SONG.

Come back—come back—I am fleeting far
To my distant home in a cold bright star;
I am wasting away—like the moon in the wane;
Like mist from the fountain,
Like snow from the mountain;
I am going—and hither I come not again.

I go—I go—like the trackless wind,
To-morrow you seek me, but shall not find;
I am looking my last on the scenes I lov'd best,
But hadst thou not slighted
The flame thou hadst lighted,
This night a fond bosom to thine should be prest.

"What a strange indescribable feeling that old lay always awakens in my mind," said Arthur, after the song had been concluded—"To what circumstance could those wild verses have related?"

"There is a romantic legend attached to them, which I remember having heard many years ago from an old retainer of my family," replied Teresa.

"A legend! Dear Teresa, you know my passion for legendary lore. Can you recall it to memory?"

"I doubt not but I can; and as the moral it contains may afford a useful lesson to your inconstant sex, I will repeat it for you."

A half reproachful smile from Arthur was his only defence against this sportively aimed shaft.

LEGEND.

"It was (began Teresa) in those days of chivalric gallantry when ladies' smiles were won amidst breaking lances, and when cleft hearts and helmets were quite the *ton*, that a brave and accomplished English knight, Sir Edred Walthen, the heir of large and fruitful domains, returned to his paternal castle crowned with laurels reaped in the conquered plains of France under the victorious banner of our third Edward. The youthful warrior had accompanied the king on his return from France to the English capital; and, amidst the gallant train of courtiers that composed the royal retinue on that occasion, none was more distinguished than Sir Edred, by the gifts which nature and fortune had showered on him with a liberal hand. Brave, rich, and handsome, honoured by the favour of his sovereign and assailed by the bewildering glances of high-born beauties, he had yet sufficient strength of mind to resist the allurements of love and ambition, and to follow the dictates of his free fancy,

which led him to indulge in the manly sports of the chase in his native forests, rather than waste his youth and health in the meretricious pleasures of a peaceful court.

"It was, therefore, with feelings of ill-suppressed chagrin that many a proud fair one, who had contemplated bringing the young knight into her silken bondage, beheld him spurring his fiery charger beneath the royal balcony, and waving a graceful but careless adieu to the courtly dames who graced it with their presence.

"Methinks Sir Edred Walthen lacks somewhat of his knightly courtesy in quitting the palace so abruptly ;' observed the haughty Matilda de Vere to her cousin Adela Norham, as, leaning over the balustrades of the balcony, she watched with a bitter smile and heightened blush the white plume of the heart-free knight till it was lost beneath the gloomy portals of the castle.

"I'll wager my carcanet against your ruby ring, cousin—that this Sir Edred Walthen would never dream of forsaking the pleasures of the court if he had not some strong inducement to draw him away. It is not of the old towers and gloomy halls of his castle that he is enamoured."

"What then can his object be in quitting us so suddenly?"—eagerly enquired Matilda.

"Some base-born rustic has I doubt not captivated him ; how could he otherwise have escaped the snares you laid to entrap his heart ?"—replied Adela, with spiteful triumph.

"I lay snares for his heart ! No, cousin—I despise him—hate him !" With these words, accompanied by a disdainful toss of her beautiful head, Matilda quitted the balcony, inly resolving to leave no means untried to make Sir Edred a captive to her charms, whenever an opportunity might again offer for doing so.

"Sir Edred, as he pursued his journey with a light heart, heard not, nor, if he had, would he have heeded, these feminine reproaches ; his heart had never felt the influence of love, nor had his lips ever spoken its language. War had heretofore been his sole mistress ; and now, pursuing with avidity the delights of a forester's life, love had found no opportunity to aim one well-directed shaft at his heart.

"Each morning, surrounded by his vassals and retainers, he might be heard making the haunts of the wood-deities echo to the clear reheat of his bugle-horn—and each evening beheld, girt with the companions of his sports, seated at the head of the great oaken table in his ancient hall, draining the wassail-bowl and making the old roof respond to many a joyous carol and merry roundelay.

"For several months Sir Edred continued to pursue his care-

less habit of life ; until one evening, after a severe and protracted chase, during which the knight became separated from his followers, he found himself in a remote and to him unknown part of the forest. In vain he blew the summoning call for his retainers ; the blast died away unanswered save by melancholy echoes from the forest's leafy depths.

"The spot whereon he stood was a small circular glade or open space, encompassed by dark ancestral trees, that, like shadowy shapes worked by a sorcerer's spell, seemed crowding round the magic boundary, yet afraid to encroach on its limits. One solitary sycamore, like the magician of the scene, waved its tall form in the centre of the enclosure, and shadowed with its spreading branches a small fountain that sparkled at its root. The rising moon shone with unusual brilliancy, and, pouring a flood of light through the motionless leaves of the sheltering tree, gave to the mirror-like basin beneath the appearance of a splendid chequer-work in ebony and silver. Sir Edred, faint and exhausted with the toils of the day, beheld with mingled feelings of surprise and joy a refreshing draught thus opportunely presented to his lips. He immediately dismounted, and approaching the spring, was at point of kneeling down on its flowery margin to slake his thirst in the cool waters, when he became suddenly rooted to the earth by the apparition of a young female clad in white sitting on the opposite brink of the fountain, looking intently into the water, and rocking herself to and fro with slow and mournful regularity.

"Sir Edred, whose courage had never failed him in the hour of peril on the battle-field, now stood irresolute and awe struck. The sudden encounter of an armed enemy would have hardly caused his pulse to beat with quicker motion ; but there was in the strange appearance of that defenceless girl amid the untrodden depths of a wild forest something so mysterious, that an indefinable sense of fear held him for some moments motionless. At length, perceiving she did not speak, nor appear to notice him, he summoned sufficient resolution to address her.

"'Lady,' said he, 'what seek you in this lone place—unmeet for gentle damsel? If there be aught in which the sword of Sir Edred Waltheu can serve thee, name it, and by my vow of knighthood I will see thee righted!'

"The figure replied not ; but raising her head from its drooping attitude, smiled mournfully upon the knight. Sir Edred thought he had never beheld a face so ineffably beautiful ; she was pale as the opening snowdrop, but her dark blue eye shone with more than mortal splendour, and her taper fingers, as she removed the dark tresses from her lofty brow, seemed like shafts of moonlight breaking through the darkness of a dungeon. His heart thrilled with a new and pleasurable sensation as he gazed

upon the mysterious being ; and again, after eagerly demanding how he might assist her, he entreated her to inform him who she was.

“ ‘I am,’ said the figure, with a voice whose tones fell in delicious melody upon his ear, ‘the guardian spirit of this spring ; for ages numberless have I sat on its margin looking into its clear waters, and waiting with anxious hope the fulfilment of my destiny.’

“ ‘And what may be thy destiny, fair spirit ?’ enquired the knight.

“ ‘To watch by this fountain until a youth shall for twelve months continue to love me with unchanging constancy.’

“ ‘Can it be possible that no man could be found to preserve his vow of love unbroken for that time ?’ asked Sir Edred.

“ ‘Mortal steps have never approached my retreat until this night,’ replied the spirit.

“ ‘What if *one* should woo thee who would keep his faith for a year ?’

“ ‘I should then become mortal as he is ; and his fate should be united to mine,’ answered the guardian of the fountain.

“ ‘*Mine* be that enviable lot, sweet spirit,’ cried the enamoured knight. ‘Here by thine own pure fountain let me swear —’

“ ‘Stay, generous mortal,’ interrupted the spirit, ‘you know not the consequence if you fail in your oath ; my faint spark of hope will be extinguished the moment *you* forget your pledge, and the remainder of my miserable existence must be with those sad shades who wander with the distant stars in the dreary realms of space through a long eternity, without hold on earth, or hope of heaven.’

“ ‘I am still resolved. Let me swear !’ exclaimed Sir Edred. ‘May shame and dishonour light on my crest, when a thought of mine shall wander from thee.’

“ ‘The spirit’s beautiful countenance beamed with tender delight as she replied : ‘Be it so, Sir Knight. Freely do I bestow on thee the full confidence thou seekest : on thy fidelity my future misery or happiness must now depend. Hear the conditions of my love. At this hour, and beside this fountain, on each returning full moon for the next twelve months, you must meet me, without change of heart or mind. Do you promise this ?’

“ ‘I do, by my trust in heaven !’

“ ‘‘Tis well ;—and this shall be the token of your truth,’ said the spirit, plucking a white water-lily that grew in the fountain, and presenting it to the knight. ‘This flower, while your faith remains unbroken, shall retain its beauty and freshness ; but if, lured by the love of woman, you forget your vow to the Spirit of the Fountain, it shall instantly become withered, and the unfortunate giver lost to you for ever.’

"Sir Edred took the proffered flower, and pressing it fervently to his lips, was about to reiterate his protestations of love to the fair spirit; but when he turned to address her, she was gone, and he stood alone beneath the broad sycamore tree beside the fountain.

"Musing on the strange events of the evening, the knight remounted his steed, and taking a path through the forest which he judged would lead to his castle, he arrived safely there about midnight.

"After his adventure at the fountain, Sir Edred became an altered man; the sports of the chase, which had formerly so engrossed his time, were suddenly abandoned; he shunned the social board with the strictness of an anchorite, and appeared to receive no enjoyment but in wandering through the solitary depths of the forest. He continued to wear the lily the spirit had given him in his bosom, which, instead of fading, appeared each day to grow more fresh and lovely.

"At length the evening of the first full moon since his interview with his mysterious betrothed arrived, and Sir Edred, who had watched for it with the impatience of an ardent lover, flew to the appointed spot, breathless with expectation; and there, seated beside the spring, he again discovered the mysterious guardian of its waters. A smile of delight played upon the beautiful features of the spirit as the knight approached, who, kneeling by the fountain side, drew the lily from his bosom, fresh as the moment it was plucked.

"*'The token is still unfaded,'* said she, *'but you have not yet passed the ordeal of temptation; if your constancy then hold firm, we shall be happy.'*

"The knight again repeated his vows of unalterable love to the gentle spirit, who listened until the declining moonbeams no longer glistened on the still waters of the fountain—and then Sir Edred was alone.

"During ten succeeding moons the young knight, faithful to his vow, repaired on the appointed evening to the fountain in the forest: up to this period his heart had never strayed from its allegiance to his mistress, and the eloquent smiles of the spirit at each meeting spoke her love and gratitude to the arbiter of her fate.

"On the night of the eleventh full moon, the last but one which was to have completed the term of his vow, he flew on the wings of passion to meet his beloved spirit. She was sitting where he had first beheld her, but a gradual change had taken place in her appearance since that time: her eyes were not now bent in intense sadness upon the waters of the fountain, but sparkled with love and hope; her form, which then seemed almost as impalpable as a wreath of mist, had assumed a more

tangible but not less lovely appearance ; and the eloquent blood had begun, like the herald clouds of morning, to tinge her pure cheek with a vermeil tint. In short, it was evident to Sir Edred that the beautiful creature for whose love he had languished was on the verge of quitting the land of spirits, and that the vesture of mortality was about to clothe the bright form he idolised. Another tedious month would, however, intervene before he could clasp her to his bosom as his chosen bride.

“A few days after this last meeting of the lovers, while Sir Edred’s whole mind was engrossed with his approaching felicity, a courier from the king announced to him that his majesty, now on an excursion of pleasure through the kingdom, purposed, for the recreation of himself and his court, to spend a few days hunting in Sir Edred’s noble forests, and during that time to honour his castle with his presence. The young knight would willingly have dispensed with this unseasonable interruption to his secluded pleasures ; but as he could not with safety evade the royal visit, he returned a suitable reply, expressive of the high gratification he felt at this mark of his sovereign’s favour. Accordingly, in a few days after, the old halls and chambers of Walthen Castle were filled with the proud, giddy, and lazy followers of the court. In the rude fashion of the times, feasting and hunting by day, and wine and wassail by night, filled up the hours so merrily, that old Time seemed to have plunged into the vortex, and to have forgotten to chronicle the fleeting minutes.

“Amongst those high-born beauties who glittered in the royal train, none blazed with such resistless lustre as the young and fascinating Matilda De Vere. She it was who, piqued at the coldness of Sir Edred during his sojourn at the royal court, had so pettishly censured the knight’s courtesy on his departure from the palace, as has been already related ; and who now, with the true spirit of mortified pride, determined to subjugate a heart that had despised her power. To effect this, to her, paramount object, she armed herself with all the resistless arts of her sex, and spared none of those seductive wiles which so successfully entangle men, to bring the stubborn Sir Edred to her feet. For some days her nets were spread in vain ; but the constant presence of a beautiful girl, whose preference for him was too undisguised to be mistaken, flattered his vanity and led him almost unconsciously from one little act of gallantry to another ; and though he soothed his scruples with the consciousness that he still really loved only his own sweet Spirit of the Fountain, he suffered himself to become the close attendant of Matilda De Vere in the chase, and her sole companion in her evening rambles through the romantic scenery by which they were surrounded.

“‘Man’s a strange animal,’ says a modern poet, and the strangeness of his nature was never more strongly exhibited than in the easy infatuation with which Sir Edred resigned himself to his new passion ;—each day his struggles with the tempter became less resolute, until at length his virtue and honour sank in the conflict, and his vow was all but forgotten. Still he hesitated to consummate his infidelity by making an avowal of his passion to Matilda De Vere, and the twelfth full moon of his probation rose upon the earth without witnessing his total perjury.

“An entertainment of extraordinary magnificence had been held on that day in Sir Edred’s castle, followed by a revel at which all the dames and gallants of the court shone with redoubled brilliancy. The hall had been cleared for a dance, and the musicians in the gallery had struck up an inspiring measure, when Sir Edred, approaching a bevy of beauties who occupied a distinguished place at the top of the hall, bowed gracefully to the fair Matilda, and taking her hand led her forth as the chosen mistress of the revel.

“A hum of admiration ran round the circle, as the noble pair moved through the mazes of the dance with inimitable ease and dignity ; and while the audible praises of the courtiers heightened the bright blush that mantled on the cheek of the triumphant beauty, she bent on her partner such passionate glances, that the last feeble defences of his resolution gave way before their enchantment.

“After the dance had concluded, Sir Edred and his new mistress retired from the throng to enjoy the refreshing coolness of the night air, in an alcove formed by the embrasure of one of the hall windows ; there, screened from observation, the false knight pressed Matilda’s hands to his lips and to his heart, and besought her to listen to his passion.

“‘Hold, Sir Knight !’ she exclaimed ; ‘would you persuade me that my poor charms could wean you from the sports of the field or the glory of the camp—you who have hitherto spurned love’s slavery ?’

“‘Alas ! I am now love’s captive, fair Matilda, and it is your smiles alone can make my bondage endurable.’

“‘Mine !’ cried she, with an air of well feigned embarrassment. ‘No, no ! it cannot be ; I must not permit myself to indulge—’ She felt she had said too much, and turned away to conceal her blushes.

“Sir Edred clasped the unresisting maid to his breast—his plighted love was forgotten, and in the ecstasy of the moment he sealed his apostate vows upon her lips without bestowing a single thought upon the confiding being whom he had consigned to undying misery by his fickle heartlessness.

"Matilda turned upon him a glance full of tenderness, and observing the lily which he wore in his breast, she attempted to snatch it, saying, 'This, then, shall be the emblem of your love, and I shall be the lady of the lily.'

"Recalled to a remembrance of his perfidy by these words, he turned his eyes upon the flower; its beautiful petals hung bruised and withering upon the stem. He knew that the measure of his crime was complete, and that he had for ever lost her whose bright hopes, like that flower, had been crushed by the hand that should have cherished them. A suppressed groan burst from his lips; he flew precipitately from the presence of his destroyer, and taking the well-remembered forest path, reached the fountain, breathless with shame and exertion.

"The last rays of the moon just silvered the topmost branches of the tall sycamore, but the fountain lay in lonely darkness beneath.

"Sir Edred gasped with agony when he perceived that the spirit no longer watched by its waters. He called on her by a thousand endearing epithets—the deep echoes of the forest were his only reply. He besought her to return but for one moment—to let him behold her beauty once more—to implore her forgiveness—and to tell her he still loved her as mortal never loved before. A soft low sigh seemed to breathe in his ear, and the figure of the spirit floated over the fountain, but so dimly visible that but for the mournful brightness of her eyes, the knight could scarcely believe it to be the form of her he loved. Thus she continued, gazing with sad regard upon her faithless lover, till her faint shadow faded into air; and then a low sweet melody came upon the midnight wind—it was the lay of the parting spirit mourning her dark doom—the sad record of woman's love and man's inconstancy. This was the song which I sang for you."

"A sad tale, indeed, dear Teresa,—and Sir Edred, what was the fate of that unfortunate?" enquired the fair narrator's interested auditor.

"Tradition says he was discovered by his vassals the following morning, stretched beside the fountain, the withered lily crushed between his clasped hands. He lived, but his name and sorrows descended with him to the tomb in a few brief years. What became of the proud Matilda De Vere I know not, for the legend is silent on that point; but it is not improbable that she sought in the conquest of other hearts a consolation for the loss of Sir Edred's."

"Teresa, think you that a female heart would have better resisted temptation than the ill-fated Edred's?" asked Arthur, thoughtfully.

“In faith, Arthur, I will not presume anything of the kind ; but since my legend has cast such a sombrous shade over your countenance, I must in mere charity charm it away by a merry lay : listen !”—and the laughing girl commenced a playful French *chanson*, which soon had the effect of restoring sunshine to her lover’s brow.





RETALIATION.

A VENETIAN SKETCH.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MANUELLA," ETC.

"Chi va piano, va sano,
E chi va sano—va lontano."



TOWARDS the latter end of the last century, Venice had attained, on the verge of her fall, the very acme of her splendour. The factitious display of power and magnificence that awaited the gorgeous Buccentaur, when she launched forth with her princely burthen, was never, perhaps, at any epoch of her story surpassed by that which was manifested at the bridal anniversary with the sea, in the year 1786. The accumulated wealth which an unequalled prosperity of eight centuries had conferred on this city of the sea, at once her antidote and bane, was now the bulwark which was deemed infallible, and a fatal security in the immaculate "Città Vergine," lulled her sons in confidence to the last. But the energies and industry of the exiled race, who first snatched from the empire of the seas a secure asylum, and fixed the marble palaces of opulence and grandeur upon the bosom of the deep, were gone; and the glorious surname of the Città Vergine—yet undefiled by the invader's arms—was doomed to fall undefended.

"The maiden city," however, deserved well the preference which was bestowed upon her in the last century, as the resort of the wealthy and the dissipated. Here swarmed the German "Herr" and the Spanish "Don," the English "Milord," and the Parisian "Beau Marquis," whilst the flower of European beauty emulated each other to adorn the magic islets of the Adrian Lagoon.

Of all the visitors who, on the year alluded to, crowded St. Mark's, none equalled, in magnificence, the display which was made by a certain German reported to be of illustrious birth, and who arrived, incognito, under the title of Baron Von Heidelberg.

With the munificence which ever distinguished the hospitality of the Venetians in the years of their prosperity, it was resolved upon by the noble houses of the Gradenigos, the Moncenigos, the Balbi, the Benzonì, and other distinguished patricians, to do the honours of the city suitably to the rank of the stranger ; and, without infringing upon the *incognito* of the Baron Von Heidelberg, yet with judicious *savoir faire*—to procure for him the *run* of their palaces.

This was easily accomplished. Fête succeeded fête. The masque—the ball—the ridotto, came in quick succession, and the Herr Baron was a constant guest.

Yet disappointment was marked in his excellency's features, every time he returned from the festivals of the great. No pleasure was derived by him from the gala or other display purposed to entertain him—morose and sullen, his dissatisfaction continued rather on the increase than the wane, in consequence of the efforts which were made to divert him.

At length the Baron Von Heidelberg resolved on quitting a scene which hourly became more uncongenial to his mind, and he fixed the day for his departure. But the noble Contarini would not hear of this until the baron had witnessed a fête got up expressly for him, and Heidelberg at length assented to his pressing solicitations.

"Once more," soliloquised the Herr Baron, "once more let me consent to witness the degrading exhibition," as, lounging in a gondola, he was wafted on to the Giudecca, there to enjoy the extent of walks afforded by some patches of garden that ornamented this fraction of the sea-born city : "and if again the insult be offered, I can no longer doubt its application—then will I be revenged."

Night came on ; the cafés of San-Marco, brilliantly illuminated, traced the boundary of the Procurazie ; whilst the throng of the wealthy and gay stretched far from each botega to the centre of the Piazza. Parties, seated in merry and convivial groups, were sipping their sorbeto, or quaffing that fragrant preparation of coffee, unrivalled since the berry was ever roasted for the human palate.

Never assert to a Venetian that you have tasted better coffee than at San-Marco. He will either take it as a marked insult, or consider you to be deficient of brains.

Florian's coffee-house, too, is the first and the finest in the world ; at least, so poor Florian himself used to say. He and Canova were very intimate, and were most determined patriots on this point. Florian pronounced that there were only three great men in his day—namely, Napoleon, Canova, and—himself ! But we are digressing.

And so, to return to the last century, Baron Von Heidelberg

took his accustomed stroll under the porticos of the Procurazie : at once recognised by the unaffected Venetians ; every where courtesy awaited him.

Again Herr Von Heidelberg wavered in his conjectures, overruled his suspicions, and joining in the mirth of the lively sons of the Città Vergine, banished distrust from his honest heart.

In truth, the Herr Baron was an estimable individual ; well disposed to love his neighbour, and to wade through the storms of life with as little buffeting as possible. He truly was cast in the old Teutonic mould. "Langsam" (slowly) was the ever-ready word of advice used by his father's great-grandfather, and faithfully was it resumed in succession, till, adopted by himself, he at length incorporated it as an heir-loom in the coat-of-arms of the Heidelbergs,—defining more explicitly the sapience inherited from his ancestors by the motto, "He stumbles who runs fast."

Verily the baron, impressed as he was with its importance, reaped the benefits of its fulfilment. No sudden calamity, no event, however disastrous to his feelings or his fortune, could suddenly ruffle the equanimity of his temper or shock the sensibility of his nerves. Thus, temporising with the instability of human decrees, philosophy found time to slip in and lay her healing unction to his soul.

But if adversity thus found him invulnerable, success, on the other hand, created little emotion in his breast : for, upon the very same cautious principle of investigation, suspicion crept in to adulterate its sweetness, and Mein Herr Baron, on the whole, was not to be envied.

Wealthy, and at the same time unostentatious, his amiable bearing soon sealed his welcome with the mercurial and more witty Venetians. Every opportunity was seized upon by them to court him, and, with real urbanity, all endeavoured to lure him into that social *franchezza* which is the charm of their society. But it unfortunately fell out that their good intentions were marred by a circumstance which gave repeated disgust to the baron, and which he was doomed again and again to experience.

At the Contarini Palace, that very night, the *élite* of the patrician class was assembled, and the diversions catered for the noble German were introduced by a dramatic pasquinade—the reigning fashion of the times.

The guest beheld in dismay the rise of the curtain, and forth sallied the histrionic heroes of the performance.

Gross was the prevalent taste for these exhibitions ; buffoonery and ribaldry were the extent of their pretensions ; and it unluckily happened that, mixed up with these, was introduced a

caricature upon the Germans, under the unequivocal title of "Meinherr Sourcrout."

"Meinherr Sourcrout" was invariably a tun-bellied drunkard, the butt of all their humour, whose Bœotian capacity was ever bounded by such phraseology as *schnapps*, *donner-wetter*, *ja* and *nein*, in the utterance of which the lower jaw alone was set in motion, no muscle of the face ever breaking the unvaried monotony of the mime's countenance, the impertubable gravity whereof, something like that of the "Liston" of our day, would convulse the audience. Not so, however, with the mime's prototype, Meinherr Baron; every line of whose face was in telegraphic commotion, who in verity

"N'avait mérité
Ni cet excès d'honneur ni cette indignité."

But a deep and determined scheme of revenge now took possession of his mind, and with the prospect of it, he was enabled to maintain the imperturbable outward calmness of his features, as he took his leave of the company, and gave them invitations to an entertainment which he proposed should take place on the eve of his departure from Venice. Then, stepping into his gondola, and slinking under the *felzer*, he ordered the gondoliers to strike for the Riva de Schiavoni, and, refreshed by the midnight breeze which floated over the unruffled waves of the Gran Canale, was soon lost in those bitter reflections to which his late mortification had given rise.

"What!" soliloquised the baron, "shall the countrymen of Kepler, of Tscernhausen, of Burckhardt, of Leibnitz, become the butt of ribald mountebanks? No more! Heidelberg shall be your champion." With this determination he forthwith summoned his maggiordomo to his presence.

The maggiordomo, Franz Dummeresel, was a personage of some importance, at least you had his own authority for it. In fact, to have seen the strut of Franz, as he swaggered along in his master's cast-off clothes, it became evident that, if he were appreciated after his own estimate, he was a great man—especially when the unostentatious baron, to escape remark, would sometimes order his dependant to wear, for a day or two, the gloss from off a *new* coat or hat;—then Franz, as if the honours of all the Heidelbergs were collected in his person, would parade about before the "upturned wondering eyes of mortals,"—the retinæ of his own peering far above that level which should "guard their master 'gainst a post."

On one of these occasions, Dummeresel, as he turned down a cul-de-sac which abutted upon an insignificant canal in the environs of the Rialto,—forgetting that he was in Venice, and

dreaming of his own dear pre-eminent terra-firma-built native village in the Black Forest,—was observed, while striding pompously along, actually to walk into the water ! To his consternation, he found himself neck-deep in the mire of the canal, which event introduced him more generally to the Venetians under the sobriquet of *Stick-i'-the-mud*.—A rooted dislike was henceforward conceived in the breast of Franz Dummeresel towards the sea-born city, which was moreover heightened by another circumstance.

In those day-scenes of revelry which, during the height of Carnival, at the time whereto we allude, often convulsed the whole city with merriment, and produced a sort of epidemical madness—such as thrust themselves upon public notice seldom escaped smart raillery. Franz Dummeresel had condescended to wade through the shoals of masks which crowded the avenues to the Piazza di San Marco, disdaining to conceal those features to which his glass had long reconciled him. It is true, Franz had a huge nose—but that he deemed aristocratic. However, a proboscis he certainly had, of such dimensions as to entitle him to the designation, not of “the man with the nose,” but rather of “the nose with the man.” A wag no sooner perceived the shadow of this promontory, as its owner turned an angle of the piazza, than he conceived an atrocious scheme—namely, to affix a ponderous pair of ass’s ears to the bonnet of Dummeresel. This being silyly accomplished, the latter was scarcely launched among the crowd of masks collected in the piazza, when a loud, and almost stunning shout, accompanied by peals of laughter, saluted him.

All that had been either incorrect or ridiculous in his past life flashed at once upon Dummeresel’s mind ; he sought instinctively to account for the commotion ; and the glancing retrospect did not mend his humour. The bad passions of the man became fairly roused : like a baited bull, he set his tormentors at defiance ; but, beyond the sport he could afford them, they wished him no ill, and the more he fumed and stormed, the more unbounded was the merriment of the maskers.

Franz at length retreated to the piazetta, where he motioned to a gondolier, and, stretching himself under the felzer, was borne away—though some time elapsed ere he could escape the roar of the revellers.

In this state of excitement and exasperation, immediately on his return he was summoned, as we said, by his master, whom he resolved to make acquainted with his griefs, and urge to quit a city so ungrateful for the benefit reaped from strangers in general, and especially from the Herr Heidelberg.

But what was the dismay of Franz when, on his appearance before his master, the noble baron well nigh went into fits ;

peal succeeded peal, each being louder than the former ! Heidelberg, indeed, absolutely *roared* with laughter ; whilst Dummeresel, gazing around in stupid wonderment, to ascertain the cause, at length, in the mirror, beheld his *coiffure* ! Not even the presence of his master sufficed to prevent his pronouncing a tremendous curse on the *spitzbubenstreich*, which denunciation recalled the baron to his task. Letting his maggiordomo into the scheme, who, glowing with resentment, chuckled at it delightedly, Heidelberg directed Franz to make every arrangement for the portentous entertainment which was to secure for both the luxury of retaliation.

The appointed night approached ; the hall of the building occupied by the baron was brilliantly illuminated—the lights from the lofty casements being reflected in the glassy canal ; whilst numerous forms were seen passing to and fro within, proclaiming, in their busy and bustling speed, the extensive preparations made for the reception of the magnificoes of Venice.

Slowly, and in small detachments, the vistsors at first arrived ; but as the hour advanced, such as would impress their host with their own importance began to appear—until the Sala grande was filled with the *élite* of Venetian noblesse.

A collation awaited them—such as had seldom been equalled for delicacies : the tables groaned under the extravagance and variety of the comestibles—whilst the choice bin of the baron's Tokai (the growth of his own estate) profusely flowed in libations to the health of the noble host.

Exhilarated by the princely cheer, with hearts warming to the wealthy baron, his guests intuitively followed his steps to the *sala del Teatro*, prepared to extol to the skies the dramatic entertainment, were it from the pen even of " Sourcrout " himself.

In the confusion which takes place in disposing of one's person with comfort and advantage, where so many are candidates for places, the baron made his exit unnoticed.

A breathless silence had succeeded amongst the audience, who were waiting the *début* of the actors—but the drop-curtain was not yet raised, nor even agitated. After a considerable pause, however, it was drawn. The stage represented a studio, and the baron was discovered perusing a book, and appearing unconscious, for some moments, of all around him. Not the immutable features of " Sourcrout " himself were so impassive as the now elongated visages of the audience whilst they witnessed in breathless suspense this singular exhibition.

Rising suddenly from his seat, and advancing, Von Heidelberg thus soliloquised :—

" Would that now, from the gloomy Tartarus, the spirit of the Roman Cicero would appear, and that to a mortal it were con-

ceded to overcome the interval of time—to see, to hear, the noblest orator that ever lived.

“Ha!—what do I see!—my vows are heard—behold where Marcus Tullus comes!”

The audience were dumb, occasionally gazing upon each other and the baron, whilst each was secretly coming to the conclusion, that his poor host was cracked—nay, some had arrived at a conviction that he was stark *mad*, and were beginning to think of taking necessary precautions. At this pass, the spirit apostrophised as the shade of Cicero made its appearance, like a tall unearthly being in a white toga and a mask, and played its part thus:—

“What region do I behold! Italia—blest Italia! thy air is native to my spirit. But thou, proclaim thy country—if Roman, once more let me lead in the human voice.”

“Spirit of Cicero, bear with me: I am one from those northern hordes, the Teutoni, that in the Forum thou hast classed with Barbarians.”

“Ha, speak on! What strides, with the imperial mistress of the world to guide, has thy country made in arts and sciences? What do I behold!”—taking up the book which the baron had laid down:—“My works—compressed into this volume!”

“Reserve your admiration, noble Roman; ’tis but the invention of a German—the art of PRINTING.”

“And here, this dial, fixed in the shade, yet pointing to the hour!”

“Another trifle resulting from a busy Barbarian of the north: a mechanism by which the hour, nay, the very minute of the night is known—the discovery likewise of a German.”

In short, the baron had collected whatever his countrymen could lay claim to for invention;—whilst the spirit of Cicero, enumerating every object with wonder, as his companion proclaimed each the production of Germans, was no longer able to contain the feelings of admiration.

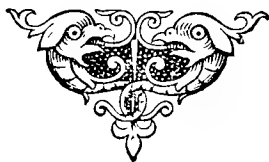
“Well hast thou prepared me, by such wondrous instances of *Barbarian* ingenuity, to witness the attainments of the conquerors of the world. My reason staggers at the unexpected display. Stranger, produce a mark of *Roman* ascendancy.”

“Behold!” said the baron, as, at a signal, a clown rolled on to the centre of the stage, forming a rotundity in his person by ingeniously confining his legs with his arms. “Behold the Roman Grinnaldi, who, though he no longer encompasses the world, has achieved the meritorious feat of encompassing his own person.

“The descendants of Aquilia, once the invulnerable barrier of the North, the bulwark against the Gotthi, have emulated the citizens of the imperial mistress of the world. Here comes

Signor Arlechino!" and, at a signal, the glittering and spangled hero of pantomimes vaulted gracefully before them, whilst, faster than thought, a thousand antics manifested the flexibility of his body. "Behold," said the baron, as he glanced triumphantly at the audience, "the Italian of our day, who no longer daring to face the foe with me, nor to cast the fetters of an iniquitous inquisition, wears a sword of *wood*, and becomes a warrior-mountebank!"

The words had scarcely escaped the speaker's lips, when a sudden murmur ran through the audience. But ere it waxed to danger, the curtain, by preconcerted arrangement, dropped;—the baron's gondola was in readiness, and he and the corporeal Cicero (no other, indeed, than our friend the maggiordomo,) propelled away by the sturdy strokes of six gondoliers, were soon beyond the Lido, on their course to terra firma, not without some danger of being overtaken by the Sbirri of Venice, for the gratuitous comment made upon the Inquisitori di Stato—and of being sent to learn manners, over the Bridge of Sighs, to the *Pozzi*, or the *Piombi*.





THE CASTLE OF WODENHEAD.

THE last golden tints of a summer-day were passing away from tree and tower, and the cool light of the coming eve lay in gentle contrast to the glowing hues which still rested on the topmost turrets of the Castle of Wodenhead, when Bernard de Walden stood, with folded arms, looking mournfully on the distant towers, as though his eyes were struggling to overcome the darkness which was gradually closing around, and, as if all the faculties of his soul had been removed from his body, and were held in the possession of some mighty enchanter, a dweller in the castle upon which he gazed.—Bernard de Walden was in love!

Having thus stated the most important fact in our hero's life, we will proceed, with the reader's permission, to relate a trifling incident consequent thereon—we mean his marriage, and the circumstances by which, to use a modern phrase, the same was "brought about."

The Lady Ina Morden was an inhabitant of the castle, through the stone walls of which the eyes of Bernard de Walden were making such laudable efforts to penetrate: she was the ward of its possessor, the Baron of Wodenhead, to whose care she had been bequeathed on a lost battle-field by her dying father.

The Baron of Wodenhead was a mighty man—fond of the world, and those good things of the same, which the mighty are apt to lay their hands upon;—unfortunately, next to himself, he loved the lands of his fair ward, and next to the lands, he loved the lady; now, the baron was not a man to be served after the fashion of a modern suitor, for as he could not boast of

"those soft parts of conversation"

which were considered so essential by the "jealous Moor," his manner of wooing was of that impetuous description which produces serious effects upon "the nervous and highly excitable

temperaments" of the damsels of later days : moreover, he was descended from a long line of Saxon ancestors, and had risen to much power at court, where, indeed, the Wodenheads always maintained an influence which has not been entirely lost by their descendants at the present day.

Bernard de Walden had been a wanderer in other lands ; for he had mixed himself up with the political troubles of the times, and, amongst other delinquencies, had, by his attachment to the Lady Ina, incurred the displeasure of his then majesty's " trusty and well-beloved " Baron of Wodenhead.

The youthful lover was meditating on these things, when a minstrel, who was both " infirm and old," crossed his path—the youth was dejected, for, as the reader knows, he was in love—the aged man was out of spirits, because, as the reader must be told, he was hungry ; and suffering thus under ideal and practical inconveniences, perhaps they were attracted to each other by the powerful sympathy of suffering : there is a sort of freemasonry in sorrow, as all gentlemen who have been in " difficulties " are able to testify ; and thus it was that, after a courteous salutation had passed between them—which was rendered, as I have said, sympathetic by their mutually miserable physiognomies—the lapse of a few minutes saw them seated on the glittering grass devouring, by the light of a brilliant moon, the contents of De Walden's wallet, in a manner not at all conformable to the received ideas of the digestive capabilities of a lover or a poet.

The acquaintance thus hastily commenced did not, however, suddenly terminate ; and the fulfilment of that adage which vouches for the advantage occasioned by the employment of two heads in preference to one, was exhibited in the result of the scheme which was subsequently put into execution.

It was on the following afternoon that Bernard de Walden solicited and gained admission at the baron's gate—and here we must caution the gentle reader not to be surprised at Bernard's rashness or the baron's courtesy, seeing that previous to his appearance on this occasion the lover, on whom some years of travel had wrought much change of aspect, had taken the customary precaution of exchanging clothes with the minstrel, the poet, as is usual in such cases, profiting considerably by the transaction.

The baron returned from the chase tired and disappointed : the hounds had behaved ill, and some of his vassals had misunderstood or disobeyed his orders ; this was enough to try the virtue of a Socrates, and it naturally ruffled the temper of a Wodenhead : but the baron was placable, and soon the cloud passed away from his brow, for having had the hounds lashed, and two or three of the refractory vassals invested in the stocks,

he became much mollified, and sat down with calm enjoyment to his evening banquet.

The Lady Ina had taken her place at the "festive board," and, at some little distance, a wandering minstrel occupied a seat ; the lady looked sad and careworn, but her dress was nevertheless tastily and carefully arranged, and as grief in moderation is highly becoming to features feminine, the Lady Ina looked brilliantly sad. The baron gazed upon her radiant charms, and as he was becoming rather tipsy and very tender, he called upon the minstrel for a song,—“And let a maiden’s smile,” he exclaimed, “be the subject of your verse.”

The wish was complied with, and the baron listened to the following words :

“The stars are mirrored in the stream,
The gentle dewdrops press the flowers ;
It is the time when lovers breathe
Their whispered vows in moonlit bowers.
The spirit of the dying day,
That shines o’er earth and sea,
Can bring no spell to calm this heart,
Unsmiled on, love, by thee.

“I’ve wandered far thro’ distant lands,
Where fickle fortune wooed my stay,
And life’s best gifts of love and song
Scattered thy roses round my way :
Yet hither come, impelled by fate,
Whate’er its doom may be,
For I can brave its utmost hate,
If smiled on, love, by thee.”

“Minstrel,” said the baron, stroking his beard with much complacency, “we are a lover, and therefore know what tenderness is ; but we are also a warrior, and we have learned never to despair ; and though thy song may be well suited to express the feelings of a distrustful and disconsolate gentleman, we would gladly hear something that savours of a more jocund mood.”

The minstrel seemed somewhat nettled, but he reined in his anger, and replied,

“Even as you will, my lord ; and if it will please your lordship, I will sing you a lay founded on a merry conceit, which struck me no later than yesterday as I passed through a neighbouring town.”

“The baron he rode from his proud castle-gate,
With the glitter and pomp of a goodly estate ;
And he smiled as he gazed on his princely domain—
But his smile was unanswered in village or plain.

"The miser at nightfall he went to his hoard,
Where all of his happiness sa'ely was stored ;
With trembling hands counting his silver and gold,
He smiled on his coffers---his coffers were cold.

"The minstrel he wandered from morning till night,
With a heart and a purse that were equally light ;
Broad lands or full coffers for him had no wile---
He smiled upon beauty---*she* also could smile."

At the close of this song the lady arose, and, followed by her attendants, retired to her chamber—not, however, without giving a kind glance to the minstrel—it might have been in return for his melody ; but the baron drew himself up as one who should say, "I have my suspicions !" and when the maiden had retired, he addressed the minstrel thus :

"The hour is drawing late, and we will dispense with further attendance. Chainwell and Grimlock, two of my most trusty serving-men, will convey you to your chamber, where, at all events, I trust that your repose will be sufficiently *deep*."

Now the baron spoke the last word with an emphasis, as though he intended a joke ; and, as it is a fearful sign when great men condescend to be facetious, perhaps the minstrel entertained some suspicion when the two amiable and well-favoured attendants appeared in waiting, to marshal him the way he was to go.

Our hero followed his conductors through the lighted halls that formed the habitable part of the baron's castle, into chambers that had long been tenantless ; where decayed furniture, rusty armour, tattered banners, and mouldy pictures were brought out into lurid and mysterious shapes by the light which proceeded from the flickering torches of the grim chamberlains by whom he was attended. At length, through long passages, they arrived at a flight of steps which led by an almost interminable descent, to a cell which, to the consternation of the disguised lover, appeared to be strongly secured—on the *outside* ! The baron's witticism was fully explained.

"Do you seek to make a prisoner of an unoffending man ?" enquired the minstrel.

"We've no time for unnecessary civilities," said one of the grooms of the bedchamber ; "you'll know your own fate, and that is more than your friends, if you have any, are ever likely to do. So now, good-night. Yet stay, I will just rid you of this toy," he continued, as he took the harp from the minstrel's hand, "for I have heard that troubadours and poets, with the aid of such companions, can make light even of stone walls and iron chains."

So the minstrel was thrown into the gloomy den, and he

heard the bolts drawn, and the chains rattle, and saw the last streak of light fade away from the crevices of the prison-door. Horrible thoughts came upon him in his loneliness ; but his solitude was not of long duration ; for, ere he had passed an hour in that murky cell, he received a visit from his very worthy host.

The baron was a man of few words. He put down the lamp which he had carried, and, holding a letter to the minstrel's view, he exclaimed,

"Stranger, I hold in my hand a proof of thy treachery, as a reward for which you now occupy this dismal cave. I have discovered that it was yesterday conveyed to the Lady Ina, on the blunted point of a cloth-yard shaft. It is written in a fair and scholarlike hand. Wilt thou own to the authorship?"

The minstrel looked like a poet who has lampooned his patron—he saw there was no help for it, so he accepted the compliment and acknowledged the writing.

The scroll stated, that the author thereof was about to gain admittance into the castle, and that his object would then be to deliver a further letter from a true knight (his master) to the baron's ward, and, if possible, to obtain an answer thereto.

The baron waxed wroth, and demanded the letter in question, which was delivered to him by the minstrel. It was opened and read ; an operation of some difficulty, as in those days our unhappy land had not been blessed by the labour of any "diffusion" society, and the unfortunate baron was consequently a stranger to the advantages of those publications which in modern days "waft from Indus to the pole" the researches of science, and the names of—"The Committee."

This epistle bore the signature of the baron's rival. It urged upon the Lady Ina the practicability of an elopement ; and, after a due proportion of those commonplaces which by prescription belong to lovers, concluded with these words, "THE BEARER MAY NOT BE TRUSTED."

The baron's visage relaxed into a smile when he arrived at this point.

"Minstrel," he said, "we would, if possible, place trust in thee, for it seemeth to us that we have been somewhat mistaken : if thou wilt desert a master who, as a reward for thy services, has thus thrown a doubt upon thine honesty, you shall find us not illiberal ; but have a care that we be not trifled with—the moat which you crossed upon entering this castle is of a sufficient width—its *depth is in proportion.*"

Now the minstrel knew that the baron was a man likely to keep his promise ; and if he perished according to his lordship's hint, he should not have the satisfaction of knowing that his death would be avenged, but that, on the following morning, a

score of serving men would bring in the satisfactory and unanimous verdict of "found drowned."

"Do you hesitate?" said the baron.

"Certainly not," replied the minstrel, who had the mote in his eye.

The baron forthwith proceeded to expound a notable scheme, the outline of which ran thus:—The minstrel was to be allowed free access to the Lady Ina, to whom he was to present the letter in question with the words "the bearer may not be trusted" carefully expunged; he was then to use his best endeavours to persuade the lady to elope with her lover, with whom, if she consented to the plan, an appointment was to be made; the minstrel was to let down a ladder of ropes, by which the luckless youth was to ascend to the chamber of his mistress, and thus throw himself into the trap which had been so cleverly laid.

"And when you have him in your power?" said the minstrel enquiringly.

"We shall see how he must be disposed of;—perhaps, however, he may fall from the tower and break his neck, in which case you will be saved some trouble."

"Assuredly," said the minstrel; "our Lady is merciful, let us hope for the best."

The disguised lover was forthwith released and honourably entreated, while everything was arranged according to the plan with which the reader has just been made acquainted.

In the employment of the baron, and regarded as his most faithful adherent, was one Wilkin Whiteclock—he was an old soldier, trusty and brave, and a man after the baron's own heart—seeing that, in addition to a martial spirit, he was also possessed of a temperament so prone to the tender passion that although the passage of eight and fifty summers had brought him to that period of life when gentlemen are pronounced "old enough to know better," he was still regarded with feelings of terror by all the nymphs of the neighbouring village of Woden.

Throughout his life, the amatory disposition of Wilkin Whiteclock had involved him in disasters, which he had nevertheless manfully borne, and which had never effectually reduced his chivalric spirit, thus,

"Still in his bosom lived the wonted fires,"

although the loss of one eye and the diminution of one arm had been part of the evils which resulted from his unfortunate habit of getting up "counter addresses" to damsels who had already been betrothed to happier swains.

Among those whose charms had attracted the glance of his "evil eye," the waiting-woman of the Lady Ina was not the least

conspicuous. Through many weary days he wooed in vain ; but the reward of perseverance, though distant, is said to be always sure, and the long lane of his misfortunes, at length, found a turning. Vainly should we hope to describe the joy which agitated his experienced heart, when the coy damsel, yielding to his suit, confessed the soft impeachment, and requested that on the following night he would come beneath the window of her ladyship's boudoir—where, prepared with a ladder of ropes, she would anxiously wait to receive him.

The moon was shining all chaste and cold upon a sleeping world, when in the Castle of Wodenhead there were anxious hearts and a strange play to be performed ; by the light of a taper sat the Lady Ina listening for the village bells to tell the hour of midnight ; the minstrel was by her side, a suppressed smile playing on his lips, while outside, at the chamber-door, assisted by three or four sturdy domestics, stood the wily Baron of Wodenhead waiting for the signal with which the minstrel had promised to announce the ascent of the venturesome Bernard de Walden.

At length the bell sounded, and a somewhat “ husky ” cough was heard from beneath the turret-window—the rope ladder was silently lowered, and in a few minutes the bullet head of the luckless Wilkin was visible at the open window ; no sooner had his little corpulent body reached the floor, than the preconcerted signal was given—the light was extinguished—in rushed the baron, furiously followed by his eager vassals : in a moment a huge cloak was thrown over the body of the unhappy soldier, and he found himself about to be borne away in the lusty arms of his unsuspecting comrades : he attempted to explain, and immediately a large portion of the woollen cloak was thrust into his capacious mouth.

“ Ha ! traitor ! ” exclaimed the baron, “ art thou at length rewarded ?—Should a wretch like thee seek the fair hand of the ward of the Baron of Wodenhead ? Here the *mass* beneath the cloak attempted a sort of explanatory motion. “ Struggle not, I know thy thoughts full well ; yes, thou wouldst tell me that the Lady Ina loved thee,—such, alas ! was too truly the case.” Here another movement ; “ true, she was fascinated for a time by thy boyish eye and flowing hair.” The luckless Wilkin was adorned with a head of grizzled black—“ but that dream is passed away for ever, and she is now a witness of the punishment which thy temerity deserves ; bear him away to the deepest dungeon of the castle ! I will follow and feast upon his groans ! Minstrel, to thy care at present I commit my ward : in a few moments, when I have seen to the safe custody of this unhappy youth, I will return and reward thy vigilance.”

Confusion reigned throughout the castle ; the miserable Wilkin

was borne to a gloomy dungeon, while the baron was exulting in all the sweets of gratified revenge ;—when his emotion had somewhat subsided, he returned to the room in which he had left the lady to the care of the minstrel—the chamber was tenantless—a taper was burning upon a table on which a written paper was also placed ; the baron rushed forward and seized it with eager haste—his astonished eyes rested on the following words :

“ Thanks to the wit that could not trace
De Walden in the minstrel’s face ;
The worthy baron sadly sips
A bowl he drugged for other lips ;
And trusting to a traitor’s aid,
Finds to his cost himself betrayed ! ”

S.





THE COFFIN-MAKER OF DROGHEDA.

"They say this town is full of cozenage."—*Comedy of Errors*.

THE few dreary hours of a misty December day were fast verging and darkening into the shrouding and moonless obscurity of nightfall, which indicated sleet and storm, when two weary and road-stained travellers passed slowly on foot down the steep long hill that circuits part of the old town, and forms an acute angle with the bridge, whose arches overhang the Boyne, as it ripples against the quays of Drogheda. The houseless, and desolate prospect of the country through which they had journeyed, as it lay fallow and dormant beneath the freezing breath of winter, increased the cheerfulness and comfort with which the clustering buildings of the town, now illuminated for the night, and resounding with the hum and bustle of their occupants returning after the past labours of the day, inspired in the hearts of the toilworn wayfarers—contrasting so powerfully with the wildness of the sea-shore road they had been traversing on their harassing march.

The appearance and garb of the men, as they stopped for a moment beneath one of the lamps, that was raised at the corner of a long lane of mean suburban cottages, and pointed a shorter and steeper road out from the eminence to the base of the hill, and which descended into the centre of the main street, were distinguished by strangely-contrasted marks of opposite callings and pursuits; one, whose tightly-built well-fitting clothes, though coarse and soiled, black stock, hair closely cut (slightly silvered by years and foreign service), and high erect bearing denoted at once the veteran soldier—appeared anxious to separate from his companion, a low, pallid man, of ghastly complexion, attired in rusty black originally made for a person much above his height, whose company was evidently forced upon him,—and at the same time wished to effect his object with courtesy and quietness.

"Here, then, I repeat what I have already stated, that it is full time, and fitting place, for us to part; for your society during our journey, and information respecting our route, though un-

sought for on my part, I thank you ; but as to housing myself for the night, and foraging for a supper, though absent five-and-twenty years from my native town, I am too old a campaigner not to be aware how to find a billet, without either your advice or assistance. So, once more, good-night."

"But stay, you know not where to look," rejoined the other ; "you will not find a single friend or acquaintance living or left ; the character of the place is quite changed since you were last quartered here ; and as you have cash and valuables about you, you will be robbed and plundered by the crew among whom you intend to trust yourself. I speak as a friend to you. Come home, and lodge with me to-night, and in the morning you can please yourself better, if you wish."

"What, go and lodge at a coffin-maker's shop—for of such a concern you have represented yourself to be the owner ; with shrouds for my sheets, and tin angels for my companions ? No, I would rather lie under that turf-clump yonder all night, with the sky for my quilt, and the wind to sing me asleep. But, Sir, I dismiss at once you and your interference, you have fastened yourself upon me this day, insensible to all the hints I gave how unacceptable your company was ; you worried out of me the secret, that I had concealed about my person all my little stock of wealth, the earnings of my past service—and now you insist on being my pioneer in my private arrangement for the night. You, Sir, see those two roads, this one I choose for my line of march, the other is your way ; adopt it forthwith, or I shall be compelled to teach you a quick step, that will leave the remembrance of my drill on your back for the next quarter."

"Oh, captain, if you are afraid to trust me, though may I never screw down another——"

"*Fear* you, you miserable shadow of an undertaker !—not if you were marching at the head of all the muffled drums in the Guards. Lead on there to your hovel, the entertainment cannot be so bad as the host."

The man who lived "by death's doings" turned away his face to conceal a low chuckle of satisfaction at the consent his last insinuation had wrung from the reluctant veteran, and, burying his pale withered features in the high standing collar of his old fashioned single breasted coat, at the same time stooping low to escape the violence of a cutting shower that now began to fall, slanting full into their faces, intimated his readiness to proceed—and, followed by the soldier, crossed the Pont Neuf of the Boyne, and entered the "loyal and corporate" city of Drogheda.

As they passed through the streets, brilliant with the lights in the windows of the shops and hotels, and crowded with artisans, sailors, grooms, labourers, and soldiers thronging to their barracks, the wanderer returned to his birthplace felt regret at so

unwisely trusting himself to the guidance of one he knew nothing of, and seemed to dislike ; and several times was on the point of breaking from him, and accosting one of the troopers as they passed him with a look that recognised him as a brother of the service, to request a direction to a decent lodging for the night ; but his guide and his promise recurred to his recollection as often, to strengthen the silly resolution he had been nettled to adopt.

A fountain which may be stepped across is the source of the Nile—the actions that colour the course of our lives, are often dictated by some forgotten trifle.

Following his pilot in silence, and watching him narrowly, to detect any intercourse or concerted league with an associate who might be waiting for him near the locality of his abode, he was partially satisfied at finding him pass by the various groups on the way without either sign or word to denote previous acquaintance, and hold a direct course for the further extremity of the long principal street, until they came to a break in the line of houses, formed by a narrow lane (one of the outlets of the town), that branched down towards the river's edge, whose black discoloured current, stained by the floating lees and scum from an extensive manufactory, glided sluggishly past a row of mean, gloomy cabins built upon its brink, parallel to the line of the main street—and increased, while it harmonised with, the dreariness of the situation and prospect.

"Here we are," said the artist of coffins, the last master of mortal ceremonies ; "we are now near home, keep close to me through this passage, or you may miss me in the dark—we turn, mind you, to the left, along the river : " and darting down the "angiport," he led the way to his retired abode.

Along the margin of the black silent flood they moved for awhile, like shades wandering on the banks of Acheron, until the traveller's guide suddenly plunged aside into a dark opening, which at first appeared like the yawning entrance to some subterranean excavation, and the soldier for a moment paused, and considered the prudence of following further the strange and mysterious track his companion selected.—"No matter," he reflected ; "it cannot be worse than a breach !" and hurried after.

Extending his hands cautiously before him, he discovered, by the damp footing of an uneven and broken flagway (on which he often slipped and fell against the rough-plastered surface of surrounding walls), that they were passing through a long, narrow, partitioned hall, leading to a steep winding staircase, on whose lowest flight his associate waited for him, and grasping him by the hand, conducted him up to the landing-place upon the second story of the lonely and secluded building into which he had so unexpectedly been ushered.

"Here is the door of my own room—now do not feel uneasy, as my workshop is below stairs : I am glad to see, too, the fire is not quite extinguished—I must try for the key."

The vigilant old veteran remarked, that although he very ostentatiously produced a large iron key, of curious and complex construction, the door, before a single ward of the lock could be turned, yielded to a gentle push, and had evidently not been secured. He entered the room, however, without noticing the device contrived to lull his suspicions : a few red coals were gleaming in the bottom of the grate, but threw out insufficient flame to illumine the furniture, or discover the extent of the apartment. He was able, notwithstanding, to reconnoitre the general bearings of the room with a hasty glance, and as he was now much wearied and fatigued, any sign or promise of rest and refreshment was eagerly welcomed.

The appearance of the room was small and confined ; a number of household goods, and heavy unwieldy fixtures, large garde-robes, tall book-cases carved in old quaint figures and inlaid with brass discoloured by age and neglect, tables of brown mahogany, and old defaced Dutch paintings in tarnished gilded frames—all being of different styles and patterns, purchased at various intervals at rummage-sales of bankrupt brokers, were stowed and crowded together in most perplexing and promiscuous confusion.

The guest was much astonished at perceiving this goodly, though diverse and motley array of appointments massed together, so different from the squalid and impoverished mien of their proprietor—and throwing himself into a large highbacked chair, attempted to examine more closely the features of his host, who, as if unwilling to undergo a personal scrutiny, concealed his face, and commenced stirring up the sinking fire with a zeal and earnestness that too soon betrayed his purpose, as the embers, as if by accident, were entirely raked out and quenched.

"This will not do," said he, as the quivering flame subsided, and at last totally expired. "I must get candles ; my store is below stairs—I shall not be absent a moment."

When he left the room, which was now quite dark, the soldier was positive, *that this time* the door, when it closed after him, was really locked, and the key withdrawn. Starting up, he rushed to the door, and pulling it forcibly, assured his senses of the fact.—He smiled, and quietly rescated himself.—"What can he mean? Does he fear I may rob him in his absence? or does he mean to try that trick on me? Let him if he choose ! I have two friends here that I have not yet introduced to him, who will not see me injured !"—and he grasped firmly a brace of pocket-pistols concealed beneath his coat, and

waited patiently for the returning step of his extraordinary entertainer.

When Steevens was last dwelling in Drogheda, every house, street, face, and walk, was familiar and beloved as his own home and brethren. Twenty-five years, a fragment of a century, had gone over, and he was entrapped, confined in a base den in the purlicus—an unknown, disregarded alien, with distrust and melancholy fastening on his heart, in lieu of the joy and welcome from expectant friends he had vainly anticipated.

Successive trains of ideas were moving gradually more slowly and measured through his mind, from the absence of external objects to excite their corresponding images, and sleep began to steal upon his wearied frame, sealing up the fountains of thought and sensation, when a sound, as of a suppressed and regular breathing at the opposite end of the apartment, put to instant flight the approaches of repose, and like a trumpet blast, roused him to energy and action.

He sprang from the chair on which he had been sinking into slumber, and endeavoured to thread his way through the labyrinth of encumbrances towards the direction the sound seemed to indicate ; but at that instant, a footstep was heard upon the outer lobby, the door was thrown open, and a glare of light, bright, powerful and sudden, as the uplifted footlights of a proscenium kindled up every object in the room, and diverted his attention from further pursuing his investigation. His host had returned, preceding a domestic—an elderly, austere female, who carried a large tray, laden with glasses, wax candles, cold meats, and wine, served with more neatness and taste than the appearance of the dwelling would warrant, who set them on the table, and directing one look of peculiar searching meaning at her master's guest, silently withdrew.

"Come, now, and drink a glass of wine with me, after all the ill-natured things you said upon your way here ; but I forgive you ; my own appearance (and he looked round his room with some pride) is, I am glad to say, the worst of my possessions—your health, and welcome !"

The soldier moved over, and somewhat cheered at the prospect of a good supper and old wines, sat down in the friendly spirit of the invitation, and pouring out a bumper, smiled at his host, who placed himself opposite him, and behind the light. "A promise of this bottle would have kept me closer than that lock twice bolted. By-the-bye, what did you intend, when you left me just now, by turning your parlour into a guard-room ? You locked me in."

"'Twas but from habit, then ; I treat all my customers so ; but how like you your entertainment and lodging ?—You are not eating, nor do you seem inclined to drink either."

"Nay, I am freely employed at both. The style of your abode, and the repast you have served up, are such as I have seldom fallen in with; but the variety of articles here, all old and worn, look all like legacies bequeathed by the dead whom you have furnished with their narrow houses—grouped together in awful and solemn assembly. Are they really gifts from your departed friends?"

The proprietor gave no answer, and by his instant change of colour, seemed to disrelish the remark.

"But however, your extensive acquaintance with those who have gone before us on the last long march, may aid you in answering a question I wish to put concerning a very near relative, the only one, indeed, left me in this world, whose death I have heard reported; but the correctness of the rumour I have invariably distrusted. — Can you say with certainty, does William Steevens yet live in this town? You must have known him—Steevens, the draper, in the High-street? I hear he left the town long since, and fear he went to the bad."

"I will consult my books, and inform you if his name be registered on my list."

He arose, unlocked a large folio volume in black funereal binding, and running over his private alphabetical reference, turned to the given page, and without reading the entries on the leaf, marked the place with ribbon, and closed the book again, questioning, as he did so, his guest fiercely and abruptly:

"And so, you too are interested in this man's life or death! Who are you—and what has brought you home?—What has brought you *here* at this unlucky moment? Are not you his youngest brother, the soldier—the life that I was told had long since dropped in the lease of Magallen, which the old Lord Dunlea made to your father—into the purchase of which farm I have been cheated?"

"My brother's breath, if yet he draws it in this troubled world, shall not disturb you in possession: the ground you speak of has been too unfortunate to all our family ever to tempt us to resettle on it. I have had a hard and rugged road myself to tread through life, 'tis nearly over now, and all I wish is to sink quietly into the grave without strife or contention with my kind."

The solemn and quiet tone, in which the veteran confessed the gentle spirit of resignation that reigned in his heart, appeared to sink into the soul of the crafty and designing wretch who had enticed him into the house, and for an instant staggered the resolution that was beginning to gleam from his piercing and bloodthirsty eyes. "But how can the interest have reverted to Lord Dunlea, when you yet live? You are the third original life, even admitting that your brother's has

dropped, as your father's surely has, these some years back—and you his heir have now returned to dispossess me, man, I see it plainly. The title that I purchased on, from the scheming agent, is defective, and you stand between me and my right."

"You give me information of my own legal claim to my father's property that I have hitherto been ignorant of, for I was a boy when I enlisted and went abroad, and of course knew nothing of his affairs. My brother's mysterious disappearance from his home, an account of which reached me some short time before my father died, is yet no proof of his demise, and now answer me; how came you to challenge me for William Steevens's brother?"

"The likeness."

"You knew him well then, you confess; what is your own opinion of his fate?"

"That your own may be similar: but come, we will talk of business in the morning, at present I am weary and feel disposed to sleep, you will find a couch within there, what say you to occupy it?"

"If it were as hard and narrow as one of your own 'wooden surtouts' I should stretch myself upon it willingly."

"Then we will try it; come——"

Holding one of the branch-lights, he led his guest to the end of the apartment next the window and most remote from the door, drawing down the thick double-blind of the former as he approached, and pointing to a sofa, intrenched between two ponderous and lofty presses, which afforded scarcely sufficient space to the traveller to extend himself at full length. He waited until he had lain down, and then opening the wardrobe beside him, which when lowered formed a couch, he extinguished the taper, and stretched his limbs to sleep.

The soldier, though fatigued, did not sink into that ready slumber which a consciousness of comfort and security so quickly lulls the senses into; he still distrusted his host: he had disliked him from the first, and the burst of passion into which he was betrayed, on discovering the character and identity of his guest, continued to excite and fan the flame of suspicion that yet smouldered in the mind of Steevens. He listened, the room was dark, and still, and hushed; the breathing of his neighbour, was of one in the enjoyment of regular and tranquil repose, and yet, he was not satisfied: he examined his weapons, and the click of the spring, as he half-cocked each pistol, echoed through the room, with a report startling and doubly loud, from the intense silence and quietude of the place.

"I must remain awake," thought he, "and perhaps 'tis better. I can fancy myself once more an outlying picket."

Some three-quarters of an hour might have elapsed, when his

vigilance was stung to its highest pitch, by distinctly hearing his host rise from the couch, and creep with silent pace, as if, like Lear's horseman, he was "shod with felt," to the far corner of the room whispering in accents that would be almost inaudible in the echoing gallery of St. Paul's cathedral—"Now!" The signal was responded to by a creaking on the floor, and a suppressed yawn, as when one struggles with slumber and a sudden summons to awake: and then there was a voice, another and a strange one, yet whose accents fell on Steevens's ear, with a dim transitory sense of being heard before, and in another place; but all continued murky and dark as midnight.

"Well, what's the go now, that you stir me up before I have half slept off that poison, nicknamed usquebaugh, you dosed me with last night? What foul trick is on the cards now, old black knave?"

"Only a turn, for which I hired you. You have done nothing lately to earn your peck. I have a bird asleep here, a *goldfinch*; his singing must be stopped—that's all."

"Heartless, merciless villain! must we spill more——"

"Silence! Sing small, my canary, or you will twist the hemp for your own neck. Where is your gratitude? Did I not find you starving in the streets of London; shivering in a snow-storm behind the pillars of St. Martin's church?"

"Yes, the devil sent you to my aid, when I had no other prospect of help on earth; and the twelve months I had spent cab-driving and drinking at 'The King of Denmark' left me apt enough for your work. What have I come to! You knew me well, what I once was, here in my own town."

"Why, a runaway bankrupt woollen-draper was not a bad beginning, to——"

"End with turning out a common murderer. But I was honest and respected once."

Of this dialogue Steevens had been an earnest auditor: and, fully aware of his danger, and the odds against him, yet felt as tranquil and resolved as ever he did under fire at broad noon. He addressed a prayer of gratitude to Heaven that his assassins had not found him sleeping, and watched the slightest sound that gave notice of their approach.

At this moment a faint gleam of light glided along the room, which for an instant illumined and revealed two figures, one of whom was raising a small trap-door in the recess beneath the window, while his confederate, who held a small sharp axe, was employed in turning the flame that flickered in a dark lantern, which was immediately covered, and the momentary brightness quenched.

The impossibility of rolling off the couch on either side was evident to Steevens, escape being cut off by the lofty wardrobe

that hemmed him in ; but no time was given now to deliberate ; he heard the breathing of his foes near him—and nearer—he sprang up, swerving aside from the levelled blow, that passed his shoulder, and guided by the *whiz* of his assailant's weapon, fired. There was a heavy fall—the soldier leaped through the smoke, after his second foe, who had retreated from his attack, and dashed him to the ground ; then seizing the lantern, he held it full over the face of the man who had fallen beneath his fire—it was his host—shot through the lungs, but not yet dead. He pointed to the other assassin, who was now endeavouring to rise, and motioned to Steevens to stoop and speak with him ; his conqueror did so. The dying man grasped him convulsively round the neck, and hissing into his ears—

“ Kill him too, for he is your missing *brother*,” fell back dead, his lifeblood gushing forth upon his slayer, as he gasped those thrilling words.

In horror and dismay Steevens now held up the light, and gazed upon the livid countenance of the trembling wretch before him.

“ Your name ? ”

“ Will Steevens.”

“ Of——”

“ Magallen, formerly——”

“ My miserable brother, indeed ! You might have been a fratricide ! ”—And the hand which a moment before had been raised in hostility, was now extended in friendship and reconciliation.

Long and speechless was the agony of the repentant criminal, as he wept over his strangely-found and long-absent brother. The thoughts of the years that had intervened since their first separation, and the event that coloured the retrospect with the sable hues of remorse and guilt—the memory of their parents now mouldering in the grave, their alienated home, and the startling change from the open innocence of boyhood to manhood's stern and world-worn character, swelled in the minds of both ; and the wild and thrilling yearning of their hearts, heaved forth at last in a deep sigh, melted into tears.

“ But, William, you must fly : the voice of justice will soon be yelling for you. To the magistrates here must I at once account for that miscreant's death. Take my purse—it is well filled with gold—begone, and seek a foreign country, where under another name you may earn an honest character, and the forgiveness of Heaven.—Farewell ! ”

“ Should I not rather stay, and on the scaffold meet the fate of the murderer's accomplice ? But our family, you would say ! Well, I will fly : yet before I leave for ever, let me confess—though the tale is too hideous !—Beneath that trap-door a vault

is sunk, deeper than the river's bed, whose flood has often swept into its sepulchre. Many a poor traveller, trepanned into this house by your blood-stained victim, has—oh, brother—pray for pardon for me!—I dare not ask it myself—”

He walked to the window, and letting himself down into the river that flowed beneath, dropping with a loud splash, swam the current to the opposite bank, and escaped into the mountains.

When morning dawned, the municipal authorities were apprised by Steevens of the transactions of the preceding night. The vault was penetrated into; some bleached and fractured human bones were discovered, which corroborated the accomplice's testimony, and explained the mysterious disappearance of several solitary travellers, who had been traced into the town, and never heard of after.

The murderer's corse was buried in unhallowed ground; his effects disposed of by auction, and the proceeds divided among the destitute of the neighbourhood—while, by universal acclamation, the house, the theatre of such treacherous and bloody deeds, was razed to its foundation.

Insufficient evidence being adduced to implicate the female servant in her master's guilt, she was discharged, but was obliged to leave the town, and seek a settlement in another country.

Steevens soon after recovered possession of his paternal property, and lived long, respected and beloved. Still his days, though peaceful, rolled away heavily, for he was alone; and often while sitting over his solitary hearth, sipping old port from a silver tankard, while the winter wind moaned without, he would sigh for the cheerful bivouac, and jest and flowing can of his comrades; and deemed the hardships of his past career more joyous and exciting than the ease and indolent enjoyments of his declining days, which he reckoned as too dearly purchased by the adventures of that night he spent with the COFFIN-MAKER OF DROGHEDA.





TWO SATURDAYS.

A SKETCH.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE LOLLARDS," ETC.



HAVE often thought that two well-remembered Saturdays, many years apart, on which my mind was occupied with affairs relative to the same individuals, were so remarkably distinct from each other, that they might be worth describing, and placing in juxtaposition.

Staying for a few days at the house of a friend in London, I one morning heard a gentle tap at my door, an hour or two earlier than my usual time of rising, and on demanding who was there, a female voice replied in a low but most significant tone,

"Do not be alarmed—it is Mrs. Hadley. I only wish to remind you that this is *Saturday*, and you know what is to take place to-day."

"Certainly, Madam," said I. "You will see me below shortly."

And with most determined resolution, which by-the-way is necessary to launch a drowsy man from his warm bed at an early hour, into the bustle of a new day, I started up, performed my ablutions, and hastened down.

The day was really one of some interest, as Mrs. Hadley's only daughter was to be married; and I, in character of father, was to give the bride at the altar to my friend Rollins.

It was the whim of the parties, though all the world approved of the match, to have the ceremony managed as slyly as if there had been the regular dramatic array of avaricious fathers, snarling uncles, and indignant guardians, opposed to it.

Such being the case—breakfast over, we slipped out as if for a morning walk, made a pedestrian advance to the nearest coach stand, and were thence presently transported to a church in the suburbs, where, as I took upon myself facetiously to remark when the clergyman had finished, the young lady soon lost her good name, and Miss Hadley was no more.

Our retreat from the church was effected as quietly as our

advance to it had been. We met at the dinner-table other members of the family who were not in the secret. The mother, the bridegroom, and the bride, were excessively entertained by some allusions to the business of the morning which I ventured to throw out, and which must have been singularly clever, as they did not produce even a smile from the rest of the party, so nicely did I manage to guard against witticism being too obvious. We got through the day, in fact, without exciting any suspicion. On the next, the marriage was announced in due form.

Now for the second Saturday :—

“Time, whose haste no mortal spares,”

passed on, and the population of Great Britain had been increased by some eight or nine boys and girls in consequence of the union above described, when, early in September last year, I received a note from Rollins, announcing the death of his highly respected lady, and requesting me on the following *Saturday*, to follow to the grave her whom, seventeen years before, he had received from my hands at the altar.

On the day named I repaired to that same house from which, on the occasion of the wedding, we had stolen to the coach. To me, the scene was deeply affecting; and my sorrow was augmented by those youthful mourners who attended, of whom none were present on the *former* Saturday. “Could we have foreseen,” thought I, “that such a train of weepers would have been produced by the event in which we then exulted, how greatly would our satisfaction have decreased!” Alas! human joy—so frail in its foundation—so evanescent in itself—could seldom endure for an hour if man were endowed with prescience!

Other individuals met my eye whom I had not lately encountered, but whom I knew to be old friends of the family. Three of these, who were at the first-named period mere lads, now came before me as set men:—they were then giddy romping boys. One, now a barrister, exhibited all that solemnity of manner which passes among young practitioners at the bar for dignity—another, that steadfast, scrutinising air which belongs to an officer of some standing in the excise; while the third, who was formerly a lathy stripling of a clerk, had by the lapse of seventeen years been ripened into a corpulent, well-disciplined attorney.

Hat-bands, cloaks, and gloves, were now supplied. I could not help remarking the celerity with which the medical gentleman put on his cloak, and the superior dignity and grace with which he wore it. To me it was quite evident that he had had very considerable practice.

We entered the coaches. I looked round to see the **sable** train. The nodding plumes on the horses' heads—the attendants with their black wands and batons on either side—and the crowd of idle spectators—formed a striking spectacle. I reflected that we had no such display, and had attracted no such notice, on the former Saturday; and felt, in that moment, all the difference between unostentatious mirth and the stately pageantry of woe.

Just as the procession began to move towards its destination, the proprietor of a street organ thought fit to strike up "Home, sweet home!" I can scarcely define my feelings, but there was something in this accidental circumstance extremely touching.

In due time we reached the place of interment. We entered the church, and the clergyman commenced *his* part. The affecting service was so affectedly delivered, that to me it sounded quite ridiculous. The door was frequently opened by persons coming in while this was in progress, and the pulley being deranged, made a strangely inharmonious noise, which at first I really thought was the cackling of a gander. The reverend gentleman, I could half fancy, had the same idea, for more than once he looked angrily towards the door like one resolved to

"Bear, like the Turk, *no brother* near the throne."

When we approached the grave, and the coffin had been lowered to its final resting place, my attention was arrested by the technical enquiry of the grave digger—who, having scrambled up a handful of earth, demanded of the undertaker if it were "*a brother or a sister.*" The proper answer was given, forwarded by him through the clerk to the minister, and the ceremony was completed.

I shall not proceed with the history of the second Saturday, further than to state, that we all, on reaching his house, attacked poor Rollins with such a series of consolatory speeches, that I think his fortitude must have been severely tried. Of that excellent quality he, however, naturally possesses a very considerable share, and it enabled him on this occasion to endure our comfort. I may, perhaps, be allowed to add, that he declared he should, unlike many who lose their wives, be in no haste to marry again. On the last day of November he still remained single. I shall not mention a report which reached me early in the ensuing month.



A WORD OR TWO ABOUT GEOFFREY GOOCH.

BY CHARLES WHITEHEAD.

CHAPTER I.

THERE is a street a considerable distance down Oxford Street, on the right hand, in which the number of shops bears no proportion to the quantity of private houses. The old established shop for the sale of hosiery and woollen goods—a shop rendered noticeable by a gilded sheep suspended from its spine over the threshold—had been for many years carried on by my father ; and in this street, and in this house, on the first of November, and in the year of the scarcity of bread, did I, Geoffrey Gooch, first see the light—or rather the darkness—of existence—the son and heir, and, as it afterwards appeared, the only child of Mr. Gregory Gooch, and Mellicent his wife.

I am no fatalist, and extend no faith to the doctrine of necessity ; and, moreover, I cannot concur in the belief expressed by a certain unfortunate wight, that, were he to turn hatter, people would be born without heads ; and yet I cannot but think that Fortune, who so often smiles upon the undeserving, as frequently casts malignant leers at some more worthy creatures who do not happen to have any small change of luck about them.

Even from my birth, a special gloom overhung my infant pericranium. My earliest lamentations portended future cause for them ; and old Roger Hine, the optician and astrologic experimenter, after probing, and poring, and perplexing himself over my horoscope, pronounced the configuration of the stars to be decidedly unsatisfactory and “ queer ; ” and upon being pressed to furnish further revelations, turned restive and snappish, and dumb-founded the querists by discharging a volley of cabalistic occultations.

A straw thrown up will show which way the wind blows. Even so the lesser casualties attendant upon my infancy were, I doubt not, typical of my trials in reserve. I turned more sum-

mersets down stairs than were ever grinned at at the theatre. I was put out—extinguished—or, to speak technically, I was “got under” I know not how often. If any one was to be scalded, Geoffrey Gooch was always at hand, and my fingers knew the relative degree of sharpness of every knife in the house.

Let me not be prolix concerning puerilities. What could have induced my father to cause me to be apprenticed to him, is a matter that was never correctly ascertained. Why he should have plunged me, as it were, into indentures to himself, is a mystery that no time will unravel. The ostensible object of apprenticeship is to learn a business; but in this case there was no business to learn. We neither carried on business, nor were carried on by it. Some persons, indeed, were complacent enough to whisper about the neighbourhood that we did a snug trade; but it must be confessed that it was so ultra snug that we had it all to ourselves. The fact is, our shop was one of those old established concerns about which people had long established a determination not to concern themselves. It lacked the spirit of the age. It had no life about it. There was a listless, supine, flabby, preterpluperfect look about our hosiery, which contrasted most disadvantageously with the spick-and-span ready-money air of the same articles in Oxford Street. In a word, our shop had degenerated—lost caste—and had now become one of that class of shops which are kept open solely for the convenience and instruction of casual foot-passengers, who enter to enquire the way.

I have said that in the street of my nativity there was no proportion kept between the shops and the private houses, the latter being greatly more numerous.

Some might naturally have surmised that our end of the street was much beholden to the more aristocratical portion. But, lord! there could be no greater mistake: ours was one of those numerous streets at the West End of the town with an almost interminable vista of houses—octogenarian edifices—always occupied—never to be let—handsomely furnished, and yet the tenants whereof no human eye had seen. Domesticity were sometimes visible; but whom they served men saw not. It was said that the rent lagged not in arrear, and that the taxes were forthcoming, but whence the funds were derived was a problem that admitted not of solution. The first renters of these tenements were the originals of the portraits to be seen in the brokers' shops near Soho and Newport-market; and the sedan still preserved at the corner public-house was an evidence that the street had fallen into desuetude.—The neighbourhood was Hogarthian.

In due course of time (for even old Parr himself was compelled at length to pay his long out-standing account to that inexorable scythe-proctor), my mother gave up the ghost, and was quickly

followed by my father, who rendered up the sprite also. And it was at this juncture, when I came to look into affairs that were now properly my own, that my respect for the estimable qualities of the old gentleman very sensibly decreased. Yes, I must confess that if I had in the first instance contemplated a marble tablet in the parish church to the memory of my deceased parent, the appalling state of the accounts, as now for the first time disclosed to me, must have checked any extreme impatience on my part to issue orders for such marmorean memento. His querulousness at quarter-day was now readily accounted for; as well as the rigour with which of late years he had advocated the repeal of the assessed taxes, and the blaspheming energy (when the water-rate was called for) with which he was wont to anathematise Sir Hugh Middleton and his descendants in a right line for ever. What a prospect was now opened before me! It is true I was well aware that the old gentleman had not hoarded much of late years, but I naturally expected to find some available and come-at-able assets, the fruit of former seasons. Let me hasten over the sickening details of this selfish and prolonged proceeding. Suffice it, my father, who had been considered warm during his life, was discovered, when he died, to be otherwise. The truth is, he had been living genteelly on his capital for some years past: during this period he despatched his meals, smoked his pipe, drank his grog, and performed all the functions of humanity with much apparent pleasure. The day came, and was provided for.

“He slept the next night well,—was free and merry;”

and thus, Gregory superseded Geoffrey, and the balance in the hands of the latter, when all liabilities were paid, was found on the demise of the former to be so inconsiderable, that Geoffrey could not but be impressed with the conviction that his father had died in the right time.

My determination to retire from a business towards which I had never extended much regard, was confirmed a few months after my domestic bereavement. I had engaged a most respectable person as a foreman—partly to watch the counter during my absence, and partly to give the world assurance of reviving energy in our establishment. This person, it would seem, had received advices from a Transatlantic friend, that a small capital, judiciously managed in the city of New York, might be speedily converted into a large one. In accordance with this friendly intimation, my enterprising assistant retired one night from my service, burdening himself with my cash-box and the contents of the till, and leaving on my desk an extremely neat and well-expressed letter of apology, with regrets that he was compelled so suddenly to take my money and his own leave.

The contents of this letter decided me. I instantly disposed of the lease, fixtures, and stock (I charged nothing for the goodwill), and taking apartments on a second floor, retired for a while from what is termed active life, to muse over my future prospects, and on the trials that awaited me for the time to come.

CHAPTER II.

THERE is nothing in this life more difficult, when a man's means are rapidly melting away, than to support the quiet dignity of a private gentleman. So many things occur to ruffle one's temper, and to cause one to discard Chesterfield from the memory. It is then, also, that we perceive the almost exclusive worship that is paid to Mammon, and discover that, of whatever faith a man professes himself to be, the religion of nine-tenths of mankind is *g. d. d. -ism*. For my part, although my finances were on the wane, I had too much pride to apply to friends who would do nothing for me. Besides, I was young, and sanguine, and thought of relying on my talents (for I had acquired a literary turn), of standing on my own merits, and, in a word, of living by my wits. Alas ! I have since discovered the truth of Dryden's assertion, that

"Great wits to madness nearly are allied !"

And I believe the relationship is never so close, as when they expect a livelihood to issue through the fissures of their moon-distempered skulls. A short experience, I say, taught me the futility of these expectations ; and as the physical machine must by no means be suffered to stop, I was under the necessity of inserting several advertisements in the leading journals, wherein I expatiated on the completeness of my moral fittings-up—dilated on my many and various intellectual acquirements, and requested to be installed as private secretary to some private gentleman—whether going abroad or staying at home.

There is nothing more to be deprecated than the senseless apathy of the metropolitan public. Will it be believed that the many times repeated announcement of the existence of a modern Crichton, ready and willing to condescend to the wretched routine of the desk, was treated, if not with scorn, with neglect ; and that the journals containing so thrilling a piece of intelligence were filed at the coffee-houses with an ignorant calmness by the besotted waiters, and ruthlessly de-filed by the vulgar vendibles of the cheesemonger ?

But accident accomplished what my own exertions had utterly

failed of obtaining. My landlady, with a prescience peculiar to "lone" women who keep lodging-houses, had deemed that I was not likely to prove for the future so unexceptionable an inmate as heretofore. She had, as it were, "smelt the battle afar off," and knew that a species of monetary warfare must inevitably take place between us, if I tarried longer in her premises. She was, indeed, inclined to give me credit for the most upright and honourable intentions; but, for anything else, she was very sorry—but [I hate this *but*-end of a plea—there is no reasoning against it. To proceed, however.]

It was with no ordinary complaisance my landlady gave me to understand, that a gentleman in the neighbourhood was desirous of securing the services of some expert and amiable amanuensis. She was certain I was just the person to suit—she was confident that the gentleman would be too happy to engage me—and although she should very much regret the loss of so quiet and correct a lodger, yet, that regret would be much increased if, from any momentary feeling of selfishness on her part, I lost so valuable an appointment. So saying, the good lady bestowed upon me one of her most elaborate courtesies, handed me the gentleman's card, and with a generous and gratuitous smirk retired.

It was with no slight feeling of trepidation that I went forth to encounter the visual scrutiny of the erudite Mr. Uther Pendragon. Report had predisposed me to quake at the imposing outline of his mysterious person; whilst surmise had been busy in extending the scope of his learning beyond terrestrial bounds. Nor was the primary glimpse of this studious scholar, which I ventured to snatch on my first introduction, calculated to allay the alarm with which I had been impressed. Mr. Uther Pendragon was a tall, gaunt, flap-eared individual, with a nose like the beak of a raven, and a mouth which, of more than sufficient natural width, was momentarily drawn to a frightful length by some habitual or nervous action, disclosing a set of elephantine teeth, whose unearthly whiteness set off to the worst advantage the dingy darkness of his sallow jaws. He was clad in sable of more than ordinary blackness, and the creaking of his shoes was of itself portentous.

"Ha!" cried he in a loud prevailing voice, as I sneaked into the room, having previously despatched an aged female domestic to announce my name and business. "Ha! you are the young man of whose character and acquirements Mrs. Flint (an unexceptionable female) enunciated so laudatory a synopsis. Make yourself sedentary. A chair is proximate."

I obeyed with fear and trembling.

"The individual by me desiderated," he continued, "should, in the first place, be an expert chirographer: you write legibly?"

Cadmus would not cavil at your performance, were he still extant?"

I ventured to hope that he would not.

"Good," cried Pendragon. "Have you a lofty and comprehensive soul?"

Here was a question with which I felt some difficulty in grappling. I mumbled, however, my conviction that my soul was of a somewhat expansive turn.

"A spirit cast in the heroic and chivalrous mould?" added my examiner.

"The days of chivalry are past," said I deferentially, "but —"

"Oh! no," cried Pendragon, through his set teeth, and shaking his head, as one who speaks from authority.

"But," I added, "I recognise something in me of that fire—a spark at least."

"Then, is there a congeniality—a homogeneity of sentiment that augurs favourably of our future intercourse. And why," he added, starting to his feet, "should I not incontinently make you cognizant of the onerous duty you will have to fulfil? Behold!" and the speaker drew from a closet a huge folio volume, and approached me; "here is the congenial labour of twenty years—take it;" but as I stretched forth my hand with a view of grasping the precious manuscript (for such it was), the author suddenly withdrew it, and shot his bullet eyes into my very soul.—"Perpend one moment, I implore you," said he, "what you are about to undertake: here is the veritable, credible, authentic history of King Arthur, of his Knights of the Round Table, and of the Round Table itself; a work, the similitude of which the world's eye shall not again speedily light upon: be it yours (for I am one of those erratic and eccentric spirits to whose inspirations, grammar, orthography, yea, sense itself are oftentimes sacrificed), be it yours to repair these trivial lapses—be it yours to clothe in graceful and succinct vernacular the literary giant I have created; so shall you become, as it were, the granite pedestal to my marble statue—so shall you be the subservient tool of me, the predominant artist. Be it notified unto you, that I am lineally descended from my hero: the masculine parent of King Arthur was cognominally furnished like myself—he also was a Pendragon."

Having concluded this elaborate speech, the scholiast luxuriated in one of those longitudinal grins peculiar to him, and laid with much solemnity the invaluable deposit before me.

"Be assured, Sir," said I, with appropriate feeling, "that my humble talents shall be tasked to the utmost to give you satisfaction in this most important labour."

"I believe it," said Pendragon condescendingly: "but mark

me, Geoffrey, and listen to me, Gooch ; I would not for the worth of spheres unknown tarnish that pure spirit of thine with much of the filthy dross which philosophy abhors—a little of which is not seldom too much for virtue and for peace. Know you not, that my Lord Bacon has averred that ‘money is the counters of wise men, and the money only of fools?’”

“He has so said,” cried I, slightly aghast at this prospect of a restricted issue of specie ; “but you must remember that his lordship was not alert at the practice of his own doctrines.”

“True, true,” exclaimed Pendragon with a grin, “a frail Mammonite. Bacon is, so to speak, a beacon to all youthful financial voyagers ; and you must expect also in my domicile,” he added, suddenly changing the subject, “the daily enforcement of a rigid temperance in diet worthy of the best days of self-denying philosophy. The hermit’s root and crystal from the spring——”

I started, and I think, laid my hand upon the stomachic regions.

“Nay, nay,” said my patron, with a grimly amiable smile, “I spake figuratively : we live, and that too, sufficiently, and shall, doubtless, strengthen in friendly concord. Go, therefore, and transport hither your wardrobe. I am about to take my diurnal ambulations.”

As I proceeded towards my lodging, I could not but set down in my own mind my recent acquaintance for one of those benevolent originals who affect a backwardness of purse and provision in order that their generous tendencies may shine with a more brilliant, because with a more unexpected lustre. Fraught with these favourable sentiments, I returned my most grateful thanks to Mrs. Flint for her humane introduction of me, and taking leave of that excellent woman, obtained a shilling’s worth of physical power in the shape of a brawny porter, and soon found myself at the threshold of my new abode.

“I’ll tell you what, young man,” said the aged female domestic whom I have before mentioned, and who, having followed me to the sleeping-room allotted to me, committed herself to the doubtful stability of a crazy chair in a corner of the apartment. “I’ll tell you what, young man, you come into this house with a smiling countenance—but I’m thinking, you’ll look more pleasant when you leave it.”

“What do you mean, my good woman?” said I carelessly, uncording my trunk with much activity.

“Why, I mean,” said the garrulous antique, “it’s impossible for you to stay here for long. Master’s the stingiest old fife as ever spoilt another man’s knife to skin a flint with. You’ll get no vittels here, I can tell you, nor nothing else as is worth having. Ah ! you may stare,” continued the sibyl, taking a pinch

of Scotch snuff from a tin box, "but you'll find it's as I say. Why, Lord love you, he gets his own dinner at the eating-house in next street, and every afternoon he gets something out of a bottle which he keeps in the parlour closet. As for the things he sends in for us, you never see the likes of 'em. I think of going back to the work'us. I can't abear this no how."

The sympathetic reader may imagine the state of extra-mystified stupefaction into which these disclosures threw me. Seated motionless on my trunk, I had no power to return verbal reply to the ancient woman's narrative of iniquity. Judging that my silence was the effect of unsatisfied curiosity, the old domestic thus proceeded in a low but distinct whisper.

"Now, listen you here for a moment, Mr. Gooch. There was a young youth as come here some months ago, with a cheek like a rose, and a smile on his face, just as you might have had when *you* came. He was to copy out some fool's nonsense as master has been a scribbling about King Arthur and his round table. (I hope he put more upon it than old Pen does upon his, eh?) Well, from that moment he set foot over the threshold, he fell away, and pined, and lost all his colour, and grizzled (he had no friends), and took to his bed; it's a queer 'un for any one to take to—there it is, you're to sleep in it if you can—and when they put him in his coffin, I'll be upon my oath, no one would have known him to be the same lad. There, now, what do you think of that?"

This recital, I need scarcely remark, made a deep impression upon me; and yet for three months did I, day by day, suffer the truth of the old woman's statement to be practically exemplified and enforced upon my person. I found that Pendragon was, indeed, a stingy old file. I discovered that he did browse luxuriously at the adjoining eating-house, and his post-meridian potations in the closet were duly noted and mentally commented upon. And, oh! the "last infirmity" of slender and rapid broths to which I was subject, and to which "master" himself, to save appearances, sat down; and the anomalous messes, nameless stews, made of apocryphal beef, with which was consorted take-it-for-granted or *petitio principii* mutton—these must never depart from the mind, "while memory holds a seat (or even is permitted standing-room) in this distracted globe."

Nor had I reason to object to the critical exactness of the aged domestic when she designated Pendragon's literary labours, fool's nonsense. They were truly such wild and disjointed rhapsodies as none but a maniac should have been employed to reduce to paper and fitting order.

At length, when I came to that chapter of Pendragon's history which treated of the diameter of the round table, and began to reflect upon the chapter of accidents, and measure the cir-

cumference of my own body (two spans and a half), I decided in my own mind, that this merely life-lingering state—this state of animation in suspense, which threatened suspended animation, must cease—must end. It was one day, after a Barmecidal feast, outraged by the name of dinner, which, not to speak of physical disturbances, always raised a degree of choler within me foreign to my nature, that I proposed to inform my patron that Uther Pendragon and Geoffrey Gooch must henceforth be dissociated. Methought he lingered longer in the closet than usual, and when he stepped out of that convenient refectory, the smack of his lips was followed by a more than ordinary reverberation.

"My good Geoffrey," said he, with one of his accustomed grins, "you have been now for a considerable period domiciliated beneath my roof. I opine, nay, I think I may certify myself, that you have indulged in a continuous gyration, in an unceasing round of felicity, during that space. You have, I cannot doubt, found everything to your mind."

"I have found," I returned with some asperity, "very little that was acceptable to the body, and I must say, Sir, that your mode of living is altogether repulsive to organs which are commonly called *digestive*, but which, in my case, may properly be termed *suggestive*—since they have done nothing but intimate to me the purposes for which they are especially fitted."

"Dietary indulgences," quoth Pendragon, "are not only sinful, but pernicious, and should by no means be yearned after; but if hitherto there has been an undue defalcation in the prandary department, that deficiency shall no longer be permitted to insult the domestic board. I have said it: but hearken unto me. You have frequently by me been called upon to transcribe sundry epistolary missives to a certain Parthenope Puddicombe, a lady for whom Hymen has never yet been invited to kindle his inflammable torch. You are of an incommunicating habit of soul?"

"Remarkably so," said I, much marvelling at this unaccustomed turn of discourse.

"Then thus it is with me," continued my companion; "I am one of those who loathe lucre: but a perfect lack of it breeds, believe me ('tis human nature!) a perfect love of it. I am one of those who, like the young fellow in the old play, have not landed property enough to furnish a salad for a grasshopper. But, Geoffrey Gooch, this well-portioned Puddicombe has acres: dirty, perhaps, but productive, certain. Consols, also, that vegetate in the Bank, of which, and in which, the owner takes an interest once a quarter. Now, Gooch, I am beloved—I feel that deeply—but I have a rival; a mean, contemptible, but a most assiduous suitor. Him must I despatch!"

"How?" said I, in considerable alarm. "Despatch him?"

"What! think you, base-born transcriber," cried the historian, "that Uther Pendragon will waive his amatory claims in favour of Simon Pimpernel,—a drug-dispenser, a blister-spreader, a pestle-pounding apothecary? But down, down, thou ancestral *animus*! My spirit is too turbulent for these degenerate days. Bear this challenge, worthy Geoffrey, to this presumptuous drug-gist. He will not venture to encounter a trial by battle. Last night I weighed his valour and found it wanting. Last night this glance caused him to quail with very terror. Last night these brows bent him into a hound-like slinking from her and from my presence. He will relinquish his preposterous aspirations. I shall cause the heart of Miss Parthenope Puddicombe to capitulate. You shall in no fractional degree participate in my prosperous fortune; and with song and dance—with madrigal and corants—shall our wedding be illustrated!"

"But suppose," I ventured to suggest, "Mr. Pimpernel should——"

"Extravagant suppositions," interrupted Pendragon, "indicate a defeat of, or a deviation from, reason. Pimpernel, be satisfied, is not pugnacious. He will eat the pie of humility—he will, in due time, quaff Lethæan waters; and, however much he may now dote on Miss Puddicombe, he will be enforced, with some strong oblivious *anti-dote* (a pun, Geoffrey,) drawn, perhaps, from his own simples, to wash her from his memory. Begone, therefore, with this summons to the realms of death.—A Pendragon here defies him."

At the conclusion of this knightly sally, the speaker slowly raised himself to his full height, and marching towards the closet, buried himself therein for a considerable period.

Lifting the almost combustible epistle from the table, I sought my hat without further expostulation, and forthwith carried the letter to its destination, flattering myself by the way with the prospective advantages held out to me by the puissant, but penurious Uther Pendragon.

CHAPTER III.

"WELL, our trusty and well-beloved squire," cried my patron, with a romantic air, as I entered his presence, having fulfilled the martial behest committed to me; "and you have flung our defiance in the teeth of this besotted person?"

"I have, Sir," said I; "and I have now the pleasure to place in your hands Mr. Simon Pimpernel's answer."

"Ere I glance over the abject withdrawal of his ill-advised pretensions," exclaimed Pendragon, "satisfy my auriculars with

a description of the manner in which he received my mortal communication."

"I will do so, Sir, as briefly as may be. I found the gentleman at home, seated in his back parlour. He broke the seal of your letter hastily, and, methought, as he perused its contents, he changed colour."

"Ho, ho!" exclaimed Pendragon, "a parsnip pallor—an ashen hue—a plaster-of-Paris tint?"

"No, Sir, a bright scarlet, with a dash of lurid lightning."

"Eh!" mumbled the descendant of King Arthur.

"When he had arrived at your imposing autograph," I continued, not heeding the interruption, "he turned towards me, and enquired my name and quality; and being informed that I was your private secretary, politely handed me a seat, and retired to a contiguous closet."

"To fortify and reinforce the inward Pimpernel," exclaimed Pendragon with a grin of triumph; "transparent subterfuge—diaphanous design!"

"Nay, Sir," said I, calmly, "not so: your own practice has caused you to misunderstand your rival's retreat into that recess."

Pendragon looked blank at this home squeeze of the neck of his spirit-bottle, but I presently continued—

"Issuing from the closet, he bore in his hands a mahogany case, which, on being opened, discovered a *geminì* of pistols—a brace of—barkers, I think I have heard them called. He examined both minutely, and then, with much deliberation, pulled the trigger of each. Believe me, Sir, the click of those deadly instruments jarred upon my very brain-pan.—But you are ill, Sir!—Has aught disturbed you?"

"Nothing, nothing," gasped the other, with a transitory smile such as idiots most affect; "go on, go on."

"Taking up one of these patent death-dealers, he soliloquised thus:—'It is now fourteen years since, with this pistol, and by this hand, he fell to rise no more! Poor Woodcock! But they all told me that he drew his fate upon himself. And now another victim! Why am I cursed with this unerring eye?' And then, Sir, he apologised to me for his sudden abstraction, and hastily scribbling the answer which I have handed to you, gently bowed me from the room, saying emphatically, as I left the door, 'Be pleased to inform Mr. Pendragon that I shall be punctual.'"

I have observed during my life many contortions of the human face, and I know the infinite varieties of expression of which the physiognomy of man is susceptible: but it never was my chance to behold such sudden and such rapid deviations from regularity of feature, and to recognise so many nicely-different shades of

white, as during the foregoing recital the visage of Pendragon presented. I must confess I was unprepared for this grim spectacle ; but as I gazed upon him, I remembered the poet's lines—

“ For men will tremble or turn paler,
With too much as too little valour ! ”

and I fondly imagined that our doughty champion was at this moment struggling with the excess, and not suffering from the deficiency, of that commodity.

I was, however, wrong in my conjecture. The clammy dew that settled upon his forehead ; a fearful knocking together of the knees which threatened the dislocation of those serviceable joints ; and the piteous groan with which, after a lengthened silence, the words “ poor Woodcock ” issued from his jaws, betokened that he was now wellnigh “ distilled to jelly by the act of fear.”

“ Had you not better read Mr. Pimpernel's reply to your challenge ? ” I ventured to enquire.

“ I will do so, Geoffrey,” returned the wet quaker—for so might the perspiring Pendragon be called.—“ Pardon me ; I had forgot ; I was thinking of something else,” and tearing open the seal with a desperate energy, his eye devoured the contents.

“ He tells me,” cried he, with a painful chuckle which inspired a momentary sympathy, “ that he will meet me at Chalk Farm to-morrow morning at six o'clock.—I must meet him ! ”

“ You must, Sir : honour beckons.”

“ I *must* meet him, I say, Geoffrey ! ”

“ Without question. The claims of honour are peremptory. Do you remember, Sir, with what subtlety Falstaff sounds the depths and shallows of honour ? and where he says, ‘ Honour pricks me on ; but how if honour prick me off when I come on ? ’ Daily experience proves the forethought of Sir John in broaching such a contingency.”

A grin of more than common extent and duration served as a reply to this malicious sally, and once more did Pendragon have recourse to the closet, from which a bottle was, as if by miracle, suddenly caused to appear.

“ I prithee bring two glasses from the sideboard yonder,” said Pendragon, “ and let us imbibe a portion of this foreign spirit : ” and so saying he seized one of the glasses ere I could well present it to him, and despatched a bumper, which although of a foreign spirit, methought he swallowed as one “ native, and to the manner born.”

“ I could well have wished, were it a matter of my own ordering,” resumed Pendragon with more calmness, after disposing of another glass, “ that the joust or tournament were still a practice

amongst us. I am prone to predicate that, cased in complete steel, armed with a lengthy and sharply-pointed lance, and mounted on a fire-snorting charger, I could speedily overthrow, even to the mastication of the dust, that corpulent impersonation—that human kilderkin, Simon Pimpernel. But now, of what avail is valour! Courage and cowardice may walk arm in arm. Lead will not, nay, does not stop to discriminate: and the bullet of the recreant may lodge in the fleshly tenement of a hero. Shall I meet him, Geoffrey Gooch? shall I grovel to an equality with him? Mine honour shouts into mine ears, No!”

“And yet, Sir, it must be,” I urged in a tone of remonstrance; “you yourself have invited the encounter, and cannot now recede with decent grace or dignity. Reflect, Sir; your reputation is of more value to you than life itself; and even should you fall, you lie in the bed of honour.”

“A bed,” exclaimed Pendragon, “in which I have no present ambition to slumber:”—and here the cognac was again called into requisition. “Counsel me, I beseech you, how I may break through the mesh in which I have involved myself.”

“Your only course, Mr. Pendragon,” said I solemnly, “is to take the field; to receive your adversary’s fire; and should his ball (and his unerring eye will probably cause it to do so) derange some vital function, be it yours to die as befits a man of courage and of high descent. Why, Sir, King Arthur would have fought a duel across his round table, and have thought very little of so mere a trifle.”

“The fiends fly away with King Arthur and his orbicular table!” cried Pendragon; “was not Hector himself seized with panic when Achilles was at his heels; and may I not indulge a private qualmishness of my own? I’ll be no prey to the pistol of Pimpernel—that’s flat—as I should be were I to engage in this unequal combat. When I must discharge the debt of nature I will; but I’ll not pay my shot to-morrow morning, depend on ’t. To sum up all with alliterative plainness—I have neither pleasure in this business, pistols to undertake, or pluck to perform it.”

At this juncture the candid dastard became moody, thoughtful, and disturbed; and guessing that my presence was not required, I betook myself to the kitchen to while away the lingering hours till bedtime; and having taken part in a long and interesting conversation (touching the poltroon above stairs) with the aged domestic, I bade her good-night, and retired to my couch, in which (for habit will even convert flint stones into feather beds) I soon fell into a deep sleep.

It was about midnight when, rudely grasped by the shoulder, one of those dreams of well-spread boards was dissipated—one of those tantalising visions which never visit any but hunger-bitten men, and then only to mock with unsatisfactory illusion;

—and starting up in vague alarm, I beheld the spectral form of Pendragon hovering over me vulture-like; his rigid and cast-iron countenance pinched into an expression of repulsive and paltry woe perfectly contemptible. His left hand grasped convulsively a chamber candlestick, whilst the bird's claw digit of his dexter paw beckoned me to resume my perpendicular.

"Arise! arise! my faithful Geoffrey," said he, "and that too without paying deference to any unnecessary formalities of toilet; I have a midnight commission for you, which you will, I feel, readily undertake. I have been grievously indisposed since you retired to your somniferous recreations, and require, and speedily, Esculapian aid."

"Indeed, Sir, I am grieved at your sudden illness," said I, snatching up my stockings, which I soon succeeded in getting on, being a mile too large (part of my late stock, and I believe a mis-fit of Daniel Lambert when he was last shown in London), "wait with patience for a few minutes, and I'll soon bring Dr. Drench to your relief."

"No, no, not Drench—Pimpernel," cried Pendragon, hastily, "he is the skilful leech best qualified to oppose himself to my complaint; progress yourself, therefore, instantan, towards the dwelling of Pimpernel. You will observe a night-bell on the right-hand doorpost. Salute him with a tintinnabulary clatter, such as would astound the ear-drum of a mummy. Away, worthy Gooch, away."

"Well, but, my dear Sir," said I, following him down stairs, "you would not surely think of calling in a gentleman whom you have only this afternoon called out."

"That witless vagary may be explained," returned Pendragon, grinning on the landing-place; "only succeed in bringing Pimpernel thither, and a *douceur*, such as your eyeballs have not lately been fixed upon, shall be your reward."

So saying, he retired into the drawing-room, and I heard the cork screwed from the bottle, and the gurgling of cognac, as it tumbled into the wine-glass.

For my part, albeit I felt reasonably sceptical touching the financial promises of Pendragon, I trotted away to the dwelling of Pimpernel; arrived at which place, I had recourse to the night-bell with a vigour that my patron himself, had he heard the sound, and he might almost have done so, would have approved. A head speedily projected itself from the second-floor window, enveloped in a nightcap, the tassel of which I could barely distinguish swaying to and fro, and the voice of Pimpernel made itself audible, crying,—

"Hilloah! whose mare's dead now? what's the matter?"

"You're wanted, Sir," I cried, in a key which might have opened the porch of a deaf man's ear. "A gentleman dying in

the next street—and he won't die without a doctor—he thinks it shabby."

"And very proper, too," cried Pimpnel, as he shut the window. In less than five minutes the door opened, and the doctor appeared, buttoned up to the chin, his hat on his head, his cane in his hand, and perfectly ready to accompany me.

"Now," said he rapidly, "who's the patient? what's the complaint? who are you?"

"I am the person, doctor, who delivered a letter to you this day from Mr. Pendragon."

"Well, Sir?"

"That gentleman is much indisposed, and requested me particularly to summon you to him without delay."

"Hem!" said the doctor, "strange, queer. If he had waited till six o'clock, I'd have given him a pill which would have quieted him pretty soon. What ails the pedantic old buffer?"

"He did not enter, Sir, into a particular statement of his disease, but——"

"Well, never mind," interrupted Pimpnel, "we'll see what's the matter with him in a crack. Come along."

"I say, my good fellow," said he, as we hastened onwards, "if the governor should require medicine, you'll return with me for it, will you? My boy is, by this time, as fast as a church without a clock to disturb it. He never wakes in the morning till I have given him a good threshing."

"Strange, Sir," said I.

"Yes, strange, isn't it?—queer, queer."

By this time, we had arrived at Pendragon's door, and proceeding up stairs without delay, the doctor, closely followed by me, marched into the drawing-room.

The sight which at this moment presented itself, being such a one as is not always to be witnessed, may be aptly termed unusual. The learned historian was standing in the middle of the apartment, in an attitude closely resembling that of the effigy of our late king, which, a miracle of modern mud-work, may at any time be seen on the top of King's Cross, at Battle Bridge. The empty brandy-bottle lay upon its side on the table, and the chair had probably fallen on its back as its owner raised himself upon his legs. And now fixing his eyes upon the doctor, he burst into a cachinnation so loud, so prolonged, and so discordant, that it might verily have scared the zoological society itself.

As it was, the doctor appeared in some confusion, and I must confess myself to have been in no slight degree appalled. But this wild laugh, it seems, was but the prelude of some ingenious scheme, which its author had taken upon himself to carry out.

"Sit down, Pimpnel, sit down," cried he: "you received my letter, eh? thought it a *bonâ fide* summons to war, did you?"

You goose, not to see through the pleasantry. I received your answer, didn't I, Geoffrey? Chalk Farm, at six o'clock. Ha ! ha ! ha !

"Fire and fumes ! Sir," sputtered the choleric doctor, springing to his feet, "and am I to be the subject of your jests—to be called out of my bed at midnight, under a pretence of your being dangerously ill—to be made your plaything—to be—d—— it Sir, what do you mean?" and so saying, he sprang towards the other with his finger and thumb extended, and, I conscientiously believe, had I not interfered, would have divested the rueful wretch of that centre of gravity his nose.

"Patience, patience," insinuated Pendragon over my shoulder: "I did not mean to trifle with you—it is a mystification of unpropitious circumstances—a combination of untoward—a——"

"You are a coward, I see that plainly, Sir," cried Pimpernel, "and dare not meet me to-morrow morning. But this, Sir, you shall do ere I leave you," and he drew out his pocket-book, and wrote something on a slip of paper; "here, Sir, sign this—in this you renounce all claim to the hand of Miss Puddicombe."

"What, Sir," cried Pendragon, "a renunciation of claim to the left-hand fourth-finger of Miss Parthenope Puddicombe? Impossible. Geoffrey !" and he turned towards me, "Geoffrey Gooch?"

"Nay, Sir, you are in Dr. Pimpernel's hands."

"Wait, wait," cried Pendragon, as the other was observed handling his cane in an ambiguous, or rather in an unambiguous manner, "I will give effect to that documentary slip. After all, she is not worthy of Pendragon's love; an ungainly female, who, when she visits her estate, will need no scarecrows on the land—Puddicombe ! Puddicombe ! obnoxious cognomen !"

"No reflections on Miss Puddicombe's person," cried Pimpernel, sternly, as he placed the slip of paper in his pocket: "for her name, it will not long offend you—'twill soon merge in that of Pimpernel. Good-night."

"It was not worth while to chastise the vulgar villain," said Pendragon, when the door had closed upon his rival, "or I would fain have done so."

"Oh ! no, Sir," cried I in abrupt disgust, "you know you dare not have attempted it. You forget that I know you."

"Eh?" cried he in amaze, and suddenly seizing a candle; "we shall meet to-morrow, Sir : I wish you a very good-night."

On the next morning, Mr. Uther Pendragon descended to the breakfast-parlour (so called by courtesy) in a very dignified manner, and seating himself at the table, despatched his frugal meal in silence. It was about an hour after the table had been cleared that he condescended to break the ice of his reserve.

"Geoffrey," said he, "if you could with mortal ken peep or glance into my inmost heart, you would then behold the affection I bear towards you."

I bowed.

"I think you were hinting yesterday, my dear young friend, that you were not altogether comfortable—that the simplicity (akin to meagreness) of my fare—that my humble roof——"

"Were not the thing : I was, Sir."

"And you would alienate yourself from my domestic hearth, and rush into the wide world, there to begin a different, perhaps, a more resplendent career?"

"I would, Sir."

"And when?"

"This instant."

"Would I could implore you to tarry with me, but circumstances have recently transpired—let me make a mental calculation. You have sojourned with me during a space of three months ; the salary which has in that time accrued, has amounted to the sum of four guineas. Let me make it five."

"Oh ! Sir," I exclaimed, "you are too generous."

"I have been so," sighed Pendragon, "and even now—but let me not boast."

"Farewell, Sir, I will send for my trunk."

"But softly, my dear Geoffrey—my amiable Gooch," cried Pendragon, laying his hand upon my arm, "of and concerning all that was transacted yesterday—not a syllable, eh?—*Adieu*, as modern vulgarians delight to express themselves. Be, I implore you, a disciple of Harpocrates with respect to that disciple of Hippocrates."

"Be assured, I will not breathe a word."

"My excellent, my worthy youth !"

"Again, Sir, farewell."

"Now, all the powers in, on, above, and under the earth have you in their keeping, young man !" said Pendragon with fervour. "Begone, begone, lest, should you linger, I lapse into lachrymatory weakness. Begone, begone."

And as I left the presence of this singular individual, early in the morning as it was, I blush to say I heard the door of the closet creak on its hinges.

CHAPTER IV.

HAVING parted company with Uther Pendragon, flushed with my hardly-earned five guineas, I made many earnest resolutions never again to place myself at the caprice, or subject myself to the tyranny, of a second master. Some recent friends whom I had acquired improved this determination. They pointed out to me many agreeable prospects, sundry level and spacious paths leading directly to twin temples of Fame and Fortune, which glimmered (they said) at no great distance before me. But how often does this well-intentioned egging-on cause a man to count his chickens before they are hatched! for, indeed, long before an egg was laid, my sanguine imagination had created a whole poultry-yard of full-grown fowls. I may add, since I am in the ornithological vein, that my money soon made itself wings and flew away; and that experience speedily taught me that the most popular literature is a sort of barnacle, which, dropping from the tree of knowledge into the current stream, swims away in triumph, and yet is but a goose after all. Was it my fault that monthly magazines were blind to my merits? was I to blame because hebdomadal editors were obtuse? could I be chargeable with the deafness to the voice of genius evinced by proprietors of the diurnal broad-sheet? I was beyond my age.

At length, one of my friends, more moderate in his expectations of my success, or perhaps more zealous for my welfare, presented me to the notice of a school-agent, who in due time introduced me to the Rev. Mr. Sleek—a gentleman who, having catechised me pretty closely respecting my qualifications to undertake the office of rifleman to “the young idea,” engaged me at the rate of fourteen guineas per annum—to enter upon my duties in “Paradise House,” at the commencement of the Michaelmas quarter.

Physiognomical impressions are too frequently erroneous; and yet I did not like the totality of features with which nature had supplied Mr. Sleek. Apart, they might have satisfied the ideal exactness of the artist, but conglomerated, the effect was hard, and cold, and without repose. But then the name “Paradise House,” suggested felicitous associations, and its locality, some score miles from London, promised a constant supply of country air. Besides, I should enjoy no inconsiderable portion of time free from interruption, during which I might put together and set a-going sundry clay creations, into which I could easily infuse my Promethean heat.

I almost blush to proceed in my narrative, and yet I must once more hurry through this short passage of my life—this blind alley in my inauspicious existence.

It was about nine o'clock on a cold, drizzling October night that, having alighted from the coach, and left my luggage till next morning at the Blue Lion, I waded down the long and dreary lane in which "Paradise House" was situated. After some delay, caused by the withdrawal of bolts, and the uncircling of a long chain attached to a kind of gigantic corkscrew, I gained admittance into the house, and was ushered with almost solemn ceremony into the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Sleek.

It could not be a merely nervous fancy which induced me to suspect that I had made my appearance at a most inopportune time. The huddled interchange of mumblings between the pedagogue and his partner as I was about to enter the room; the almost savage seizure of my hand on the part of the former; the frightful man-trap sort of grin with which Mrs. Sleek saluted me; and the sudden disappearance of that lady from the room—all these were calculated to excite suspicion.

I sat myself down, however, with much composure, to await the result of whatever might chance to transpire.

"You have taken supper, I suppose?" cried Mrs. Sleek, who, having returned to the room, had been gazing at me for some time with no friendly eye; "the young gentlemen have retired to rest, with whom (it is our rule) the usher always takes his meals."

"I have not supped, certainly," said I, "but I can dispense with supper to-night."

An awkward silence followed; and once, as I chanced to turn my head, I detected the Rev. Mr. Sleek (who affected to be perusing a bulky quarto) in the act of looking at me from under his spectacles, with a baleful expression altogether inexplicable.

This silence, this horrid pause, was *outré* and distressing; but a sudden strange wheezing in the corner of the room seemed to afford a peg on which to hang a remark, which I now ventured to make.

"Your dog," said I, "seems to be suffering from the effects of a bad cold."

"Our dog, Sir?" cried Mrs. Sleek: "we keep no dogs in this house, I assure you. Good God! Sir, what do you mean?—our infant—Trismegistus—did you hear, Mr. Sleek? can you permit, do you allow—?"

"The crying of an infant in the cradle," said Mr. Sleek with dignity, "bears but little resemblance to the whining of a hound."

"I beg pardon—I was not aware—how could I mistake?—an infant—dog—ha! ha!" and here, in my confusion, I made a laugh of a matter for which, might I judge from the countenances of the two, they would willingly have consigned me to the gallows.

It was during a second pause that followed this whimsical circumstance, whilst I was looking towards a painting which it was impossible to see, and gazing at the cornice of the ceiling with apparently the minute scrutiny of a bricklayer and plasterer, that I overheard Mrs. Sleek thus appealing to her husband :

"They'll be done to death ; give him a hint to go."

"I will," returned Sleek.

"Mr. Gooch," cried he aloud, "you must be wearied with your journey—here is a bed-candlestick," and he rang the bell, "the servant will show you your room," and ere I had barely time to utter "good-night," I was bowed and courtesied from the room, conducted down a long passage, in which I encountered the cook with a brace of partridges done to a turn, and ushered into a small bedroom—from the size and shape of which, and of a pair of old shoes under the bed, I could almost have sworn to the identity of my predecessor.

It was a beautiful clear morning when I arose. The birds (one or two at intervals) hopped about the trees in front of my window with a joyous alacrity which communicated itself to my own spirits. I descended to the play-ground, there to submit to the timorous scrutiny of the "young gentlemen," who approaching by degrees nearer and nearer towards me, feasted their upturned eyes upon my person ; and then ran away to compare their first impressions of my appearance.

It was chance that caused me to put my hand in my pocket. There was still a small sum remaining to me. The sudden remembrance of this fact set fire to a train of reflections, which I had not thought, and perhaps ought not to have indulged.

It was clear, from the occurrences of the previous night, that I had got amongst ultra-Pendragons—beings of the most intense and inhuman selfishness. Pendragon was bad enough ; but had he been matched with a female of the same tendencies, could I have borne his household ? No.—My luggage had not arrived.—Yes, Pendragon was infinitely preferable to Sleek. Why, therefore, should I—— ? Exactly so. What if I—— ?

At this moment the bell rang for morning prayers, a ceremony at which I was aware I must attend, and perhaps officiate. I made a sudden rush towards a door leading into the lane.—The name of Gooch—at first a murmur, then rapidly growing into a defined sound, and at length taken up by the whole academical squadron, decided me. Like bloodhounds the urchins appeared yelping at my heels, as I stumbled and scrambled up the long lane, which appeared to have no turning ; nor did I slack the fury of my speed until the last trembling "Goo-," and the final and faint "-ooch," died away upon the air.

Dashing into the Blue Lion, I secured my trunk, and mount-

ing a stage-coach—in three, the happiest hours of my life, found myself once more in London.

Would the reader take the trouble to reflect upon the extent of intellectual resources a man must possess who undertakes to sing the praises of blacking—to discover daily new virtues in oils for the hair and washes for the complexion—and to pass infinite eulogiums upon patent razor-strops, his admiration of me would even transcend his pity.

To discover similitude in dissimilitude—to contrive that the most far-fetched conceits shall appear to spring spontaneously from a fertile fancy—to insinuate the virtue of Macassar in an apologue, or the triumph of blacking in a fairy tale—these are emanations of genius that it is not given to every man to exhibit.


Nor do I think the present remuneration for my labours (in this golden age for authors)—averaging, as it does, half-a-crown a-day—more than the wants, or beyond the deserts, of Geoffrey Gooch.





DAVY DICKSON'S COAT ; OR, COATLESS DAVY.

BY ALEXANDER CAMPBELL.

66  HERE have you been these two hours, and where's your coat, you young villain, you?" said little Davy Dickson's father to little Davy Dickson, as he saw him approaching the house in his shirt-sleeves, with hanging head and rueful countenance. "I say, Sir, where's your coat? Where have you left your coat?" The boy, blubbing, replied, that he had been bathing in the river, that he had thrown his clothes for safety on the branch of a tree that projected over the water, that his coat not having been fairly lodged on the branch had slipped down unperceived by him into the stream, and been carried off by the current.

"Oh! you infernal little rascal, you. You idle, good-for-nothing scoundrel!" said Davy's papa, laying a stick with very marked emphasis on Davy's shoulder, and eventually belabouring him in a way perfectly unobjectionable when viewed as a specimen of parental castigation. "Where do you imagine I am to get coats for you to lose in this way?"—It was the second coat within a year with which David had parted company in a similarly abrupt manner, without previous intimation from either party.—"You careless, regardless villain; you—— Where am I to get coats for you to throw away in this manner?" continued the indignant father as he laid the chastening rod on his coatless son.

But pray, who or what was Davy Dickson, and who or what was Davy's papa? Nothing is easier than to give this information, and it may be done very efficiently in a couple of lines. Davy Dickson, sen., for the father's Christian name was the same with his son's, was a small farmer in the parish of Meiklebothram (for some interesting notices of which see *New Statistical Account of Scotland*); and the younger Davy was a little, wild, curly-headed, dare-devil boy of about twelve or thirteen years of age; and this, good reader, is all we have to say about them as regards the couple of queries with which you just now so politely favoured us.

Davy, jun., having received due castigation for his carelessness in losing his coat, went into the house, seated himself by the fire, and there sat blubbering and occasionally rubbing his shoulders, for, as nearly as we can calculate, about an hour and a half. At the end of this time, however, Davy regained his composure and began to feel a sensible diminution of the uneasy sensations in his back. This being the case, he commenced moving about the house with his usual alacrity, and even taking an interest in some of his little, ordinary, innocent recreations; such as singeing the cat's whiskers, drowning flies, &c. &c. In short, but that Davy was still coatless, you would never have dreamt that there was anything wrong. Coatless, however, Davy remained for three entire days; for he was obliged to wait—confined all the time to the house too—till another was ordered and sent home.

For about six months or so afterwards, Davy's life was unchequered by any remarkable event. About the end of this time, he joined in a spirited expedition with some other youths of excellent moral principles and prepossessing appearance, against a certain neighbouring farmer's fruit-trees.

The enterprise, which was one of great difficulty (rendered so by local circumstances), was conducted with singular skill and intrepidity. The time chosen was night—daylight being, as is pretty generally known, unfriendly to such recreations. The victim's garden was entered, and a splendid, richly laden tree selected. But who will venture up into it to pluck the tempting fruit? On this point there was a consultation amongst the young marauders. None were fond of attempting the dangerous pre-eminence, and for want of a stout heart to undertake this daring duty, the whole enterprise threatened to become a complete failure. Seeing this, Davy at length stepped forward and said,

"I'll go up, Tom," addressing a dear friend who stood near him in the shape of a little ragged rascal of about his own age: "hold my coat;" and Davy instantly pulled off the garment he named, that he might climb with more freedom. In a twinkling, he was in the heart of the tree, and had just stretched out his hand to seize a huge monster of an apple that hung temptingly within his reach, when, lo! the rattling of a dog's chain is heard at a short distance.

Davy paused in his operations. His colleagues below stood aghast. Again the appalling rattle of the chain is heard, but now accompanied—horror on horror!—by the hoarse voice of a man. The voice is the farmer's, the dog is the well-known and much-dreaded Jowler. There can be no doubt that an unfriendly interference is about to take place, and under this impression *Sauve qui peut* becomes a general sentiment amongst the party at the bottom of the tree, and off they scamper in all directions,

leaving their unfortunate forlorn-hope, coatless amongst the branches. Here, however, Davy did not now remain an instant. Being as fully impressed with the impropriety of awaiting the threatened visitation as his colleagues, he sprang to the ground and took to his heels, but not before he heard himself thus flatteringly distinguished from his fellow-fugitives :

"I see you without the coat there. I'll mark *you* without the coat." Heedless of this special notice, and these encouraging hints, Davy continued his flight, and, together with his companions, whom he had overtaken, eventually escaped at the expense of a severely fractured arm, which he received by falling into a deep ditch. This accident, however, painful as were its consequences, did not prevent Davy's recollecting his coat, for which, when the party had got to a place of safety, he asked the person to whose care he had confided it, and was answered, that it had been left at the foot of the tree, with an expression of surprise that the enquirer could have expected anything else. The custodier of the coat had thrown it down on the first alarm, in order to facilitate his own retreat. The coat, therefore, there was no doubt, was now safe in possession of the enemy.

A state of matters this, highly satisfactory to Davy. His coat again lost—worse than lost ; for it would, to a certainty, be used as a means of identifying him, and of consequence lead to conviction and punishment ; and his arm fractured. Again Davy returned home in his shirt-sleeves, and again the cudgel was applied to his denuded shoulders by his loving papa. As might be expected, in the enquiries which the farmer, on whom the attempted robbery had been made, set on foot, the boy without the coat was a marked object ; and the farmer being in possession of the article in question belonging to Davy, he was at once traced ; and, but for the interference of his father, would have got, in all probability, six months of the county jail.

Davy's father, at the time we have taken up Davy's history, was a widower ; but he now bethought him of taking unto himself another helpmate, and he did so. For a time Davy and his step-mother got on very well together ; but after she had fairly taken root in her new quarters, and began to feel her own strength, she commenced a series of proceedings against Davy, of which he by no means approved. She, in short, began to use him very ill ; scolding, abusing, and threshing him most unmercifully for the most trifling faults, rendering his life altogether perfectly miserable. Several times was he on the point of running away, and leaving his father's house "for good and all ;" but he knew not where to go ; and it was this consideration alone that deterred him. To leave it, however, sooner or later, he was resolved ; a determination which circumstances ultimately hurried into execution earlier than he had calculated on.

His step-mother, rushing like a fury into his bedroom one morning, just as he had got on all his clothes except his coat, seized him by the hair of the head with one hand, and laying on him with the other, armed with a hearth-brush, accused him of having spilt a quantity of lamp-oil on her best gown. Davy denied the fact, as lawyers say, but to no purpose.

"Get out of the house, you worthless rascal, you good-for-nothing villain you, or I'll be the death of you. Out of the house, this instant, I say;—out of my sight!" exclaimed the termagant; and she pushed and battered Davy towards the outer door.

"Well," said Davy, coolly, now determined, come of it what might, to submit no longer to such treatment,—“give me my coat! let me get my coat, and I'll leave the house this instant, never to return to it again!”

"Go and get a coat where you can, you villain," replied the fury, at the same time thrusting Davy out at the door, and immediately after locking it on the inside.

Flesh and blood could not stand this. Coatless as he was, Davy determined on immediately endeavouring to find some other quarters; and after thinking for a moment, set off to a farm called Woodfoot, distant about four miles, the tenant of which knew his father. Davy felt a little embarrassed from the want of his coat: but he resolved on taking by-ways, and thus avoiding observation. This, then, he did; and arrived at Woodfoot without encountering anyone. The farmer, a Mr. Sommerville, was a little surprised at seeing Davy without his coat so far from home, and laughingly asked him what had become of it. Davy related the facts as they really stood; and concluded by requesting Mr. Sommerville to give him employment as a farm-servant, as he said he was resolved never again to return to his father's house.

Compassionating the lad's situation, Mr. Sommerville at once took him into his service, and on the instant furnished him with another coat; one that happened to be lying about the house. It was not a very accurate fit; but it was infinitely better than none.

With Mr. Sommerville, Davy remained happy and contented for four years, during which time he had grown into a tall, stout, well-made, and remarkably fine-looking fellow. About the end of this period, Davy was desired by his master to cut down a certain field of grass, which lay next the highway. It was an exceedingly hot day in June; so, before commencing operations, Davy threw off his coat; but having the experience of former losses before his mind's eye, he was particularly careful as to where he should put it; if near the road, it might be stolen—he therefore took it to the furthest end of the field—a considerable

distance—where he left it, and returned, to begin cutting at the end nearest the highway.

Having previously sharpened his scythe, Davy now fairly commenced; but had not made above half a dozen sweeps, ere he heard the sounds of a drum and fife; and no sooner did he hear these sounds, than he threw down his scythe, and leaped on the wall which separated the field from the road, to see what sight it was that was thus heralded. It was a recruiting-party; and when they came up to the spot, Davy recognised amongst them several of his acquaintances who had enlisted; and, amongst these acquaintances, a very old friend whom he had not seen for a long time. This warrior, who had been several years in the army, had been extremely fortunate in the service; having, by his own unaided efforts, attained the rank of corporal.

On recognising so many of his friends, Davy leaped on the road, when a cordial shaking of hands took place, especially between him and the corporal, each being greatly rejoiced to see the other. In the meantime, however, the recruiting-party kept moving on to the music of the drum and fife; and Davy, engrossed by the tales of flood and field, which his friend, the corporal, was, with great volubility, pouring into his ear, kept moving on with them; but, startled at length by observing the distance he had thus unthinkingly come, Davy all at once stopped short, and was about to shake hands with the corporal previous to returning, when the serjeant, who had been eyeing him for some time, and no doubt thought he was a very "pretty fellow," came up, and slapping him on the shoulder, while he tipped the corporal the wink, said,

"What, my lad; you're not going to leave your friend in this manner, in the middle of a dusty road, without tasting something together? There's no saying when you may meet again."

"Why certainly, serjeant," replied Davy; "I should like very much indeed to have a drop of something with my old friend here before parting, but there's no public-house at hand."

"No," said the serjeant, "but there's one half-a-mile on, where I intend giving the lads some refreshment at any rate. Now since you have come so far already, you may as well go that length with us. I'm sure you shall be heartily welcome to a share of what's going."

"Thank you, serjeant," said Davy, "looking smilingly at his shirt-sleeves, "but you see I haven't my coat."

"Oh, hang the coat!" exclaimed the serjeant; "what the deuce does that signify! You're better without it such a hot day as this; besides, you won't be kept any time: so come along, my lad, come along."

The corporal added his entreaties to those of the serjeant, and

Davy was finally prevailed upon to step on, coatless as he was, as far as the public-house.

Having arrived there, the corporal, serjeant, and Davy retired to a room by themselves, and a liberal allowance of both ale and brandy having been ordered in, they soon got exceedingly merry. The serjeant and corporal talked much of the joys of a soldier's life—of its honours and glories, and of the promotion which a steady active young fellow was sure of obtaining in the service. At length the former, watching a fitting opportunity, when he imagined Davy sufficiently mellowed for his purpose, fairly popped the proposal of his enlisting—the corporal at the same instant grasping him by the hand, and swearing it was the best thing he could do. Davy thought for an instant, then returning the corporal's grasp, said with great dignity and determination, "By jingo I will ! but I must first go back for my coat."

The serjeant knew better than to allow him. "Never mind the coat !" he again said. "Let it go : it isn't likely to be worth much, and I'll find you another. I'll get you a slop jacket in Moffat, man, where we are to stop for the night, and you'll travel there all the lighter without one." Then putting a shilling into Davy's hand, "There, my smart fellow," he said, "there's the beginning of your fortune—the foundation-stone. I knew there was game in you the moment I clapped eyes on your figure. You are, and I'll say it to your face, as pretty a fellow of your inches as need be, and as sure of a commission as if you had it in your pocket."

In a short time after, the party resumed their march—with Davy conspicuous in the centre from wanting his coat—to the sound of military music ; and in due time reached Moffat, when the serjeant, faithful to his promise, procured a slop jacket for his new recruit. Next day the party reached Edinburgh Castle, where Davy was subsequently drilled into a regular soldier, and finally stuck into the ranks.

About a twelvemonth after Davy had assumed the musket, being one evening in the town, he went into a public-house to refresh himself with a pot of ale, when two half-drunk fellows came staggering into the box where he was, and without the smallest provocation began abusing him. For some time Davy took no notice whatever of this insolence ; but his forbearance having the effect only of increasing the impertinence of his assailants, he at length lost patience, and seizing one of the fellows by the breast, swore he would knock his brains out against the wall. At this moment, however, the landlord thrust his head into the box, and said that he would permit no fighting in his house, but that if the parties *would* fight, they might go out to the court-yard, and take their fill of it there.

"He go out !" said the fellow whom Davy had collared, con-

temptuously ; " he hasn't the pluck in him to do it, for all his red coat."

" Hav'n't I ?" said Davy, who felt his own particular honour, and the honour of the cloth, touched by this allusion to his coat ; " we'll soon see that—come along with you," and he stepped to the court-yard, followed by his antagonist, and the whole of the occupants of the tap-room, who turned out to see the sport.

A ring being formed round the combatants, " Now, you boaster, you," said Davy, " you said I had no pluck in me for all I wore a red coat : but I sha'n't disgrace that coat by threshing such a fellow as you in it."

Saying this he threw it off, and handing it to a bystander, requested him to hold it till he had " peppered the lot ;" and this he certainly did in great style, and in a very minutes.

Having battered his opponent till he could neither stand nor see, Davy turned round and demanded his coat.—" Where's my coat ? Who has my coat ?"

The people knew nothing about it : they had seen him give it to somebody, but being wholly engrossed by the fight, had paid no more attention to it. Both the coat, in short, and the person to whom it had been confided, were off : they had disappeared, nobody knew when or how !

Under these circumstances, there was nothing for it but for Davy to walk up to the castle in his shirt-sleeves. This, then, he did ; but on presenting himself in so extraordinary a condition, he was immediately pounced upon by the serjeant on guard, and conveyed to the black-hole. His case was reported to the commanding officer, and he was next day ordered to be paraded in his coatless condition before the whole regiment, as at once a punishment for his negligence, and a warning to others. The sentence was rigidly executed : Davy was walked up and down the regiment on parade in his shirt-sleeves three or four times, and then planted opposite the centre to be deliberately gazed at. The exhibition over, Davy was furnished with a new coat, and cautioned to be more careful in future to whom he entrusted it. A hint, too, was thrown out, that if he lost another coat, the opportunity would perhaps be taken of tickling his back with a certain animal (see Linnæus) of the feline species, with nine tails.

Davy's subsequent good conduct, however, which was, in fact, exemplary, regained him the favour of his superiors, and obtained him the reputation of being one of the steadiest, cleanliest, and best soldiers in the regiment.

Some time after this, the corps to which Davy belonged was ordered to England ; and in 1762, it joined the expedition against the Havannah, under Lord Albemarle and Sir George Pocock. On the way out, on this occasion, a very unfortunate accident occurred aboard of the transport in which Davy was

embarked. A fine fellow of a serjeant, belonging to the regiment of our hero, leaning, one day, too far over the ship's bulwarks, lost his balance, and fell into the sea. Davy, who was standing close by the unfortunate man at the moment, on seeing the accident, instantly threw off his cap and coat, and without the slightest hesitation, plunged in after him. The ship was going through the water at the time at a considerable rate, and thus both Davy and the serjeant were soon far astern. The former, however, being a first-rate swimmer, buffeted away manfully after the drowning serjeant; but, alas! his noble and generous exertions were vain. Two or three times he got hold of the unfortunate man, who, at length, however, went fairly down, and was never again seen.

The ship's way having been by this time stopped, and a boat lowered from her, the latter came up to Davy's assistance just in time to save his life—that life which he had so gallantly perilled to preserve another's. Exhausted and benumbed, he was now dragged into the boat and conveyed on board. His colonel, who was in the same ship, and on deck at the moment, had seen the whole transaction; and being highly pleased with Davy's noble conduct, the latter had no sooner come on board than that officer approached him, and said, "You are a gallant fellow, Dickson: your conduct has been noble; and I think I cannot do better than appoint you serjeant as a reward for your bravery in the room of the unfortunate man who has just now perished. You may therefore consider yourself as now promoted to that rank, and your pay shall commence from this date."

Davy having expressed his gratitude in the best way he could, went down below with his coat (which he had now taken up) in his hand, in order to shift himself—being, perhaps, the first man who had ever been dubbed a serjeant in his shirt-sleeves. Davy, however, did not think, neither, we dare say, will the reader, that his new honours would sit a bit the less gracefully on him on this account.

In due time the expedition landed; and in due time also, or, as some who were there on this occasion thought, rather prematurely, fighting commenced, and at this sort of pastime Serjeant Dickson proved himself a superlative hand. In two or three instances he greatly distinguished himself by his bravery; not only doing marvellous things with his own hand, but by his example encouraging others to stand to their tackle. No man could have exhibited a more noble disregard for the safety of his own brains, or held his legs and arms in more profound contempt, than he did. Serjeant Dickson, in short, "covered himself with glory;" having, in the very first battle, made, with his own hand, two widows, three orphans, rendered three families childless, and other two destitute; all at as many

blows, or shots, we are not sure which, nor is it of much consequence ; for we should suppose his merit is not the less, of whatever kind may have been the agency by which these feats were accomplished. But the temerity of the serjeant during the fight, was attended with its all but inevitable result in such cases. He was hit, severely wounded, and was numbered by his comrades amongst the dead, although the arithmetic, as will subsequently appear, was not perfectly correct. In the mean time, however, Serjeant Dickson kept his length and breadth of the field as quietly and composedly as the most decided corpse amongst them ; and being left there, he was encountered, after the battle was over, by a picket of the enemy—one of whom, stooping down, began to *peel* him, and in a twinkling relieved him of his coat, which was a “spick and span” new one ; the owner, as the reader will recollect, having been no time in it, owing to the recency of his promotion. In this unshelled condition, Serjeant Dickson was some time afterwards found by a party of his own regiment, who discovering signs of life in him, had him instantly conveyed on a litter to head-quarters, and put into the hospital.

“Ah !” said the surgeon, on seeing the wounded man brought in without his coat, “who the deuce has been taking the rind off this poor fellow ? Where’s the man’s coat ?”

Being unable to answer for himself, his bearers answered for him, saying that they had found him thus lying on the field, and he had, of course, been stripped by the enemy.

Bad as the serjeant’s wound was, however, surgical skill and a good constitution, placed him again upon his pins in less than three weeks : the surgeon, at the end of that time, declaring him in a perfectly fit condition to be shot at again whenever his superiors chose. Being of this comfortable opinion himself, Serjeant Dickson, having got another coat, resumed his duties, and soon after had an opportunity of again distinguishing himself.

It was resolved to storm the Moro Fort, and the Moro Fort accordingly was stormed ; but, before being stormed, it was battered in order to breach it. This breach having been effected, the British troops gallantly advanced to carry the place at the point of the bayonet. The company to which Serjeant Dickson belonged was the first to advance to the breach, and Serjeant Dickson himself the first man that entered it. Having speared some half-dozen Spaniards, he gained the top of the wall, where he would have given the world had he had a flag, or British ensign, to unfurl to the breeze, to announce that the ramparts had been gained. But Serjeant Dickson had no flag—nothing of the kind. In an instant, however, a happy idea struck him on this subject, and was as promptly executed.

Stripping off his coat, he thrust his halberd through the two sleeves ; thus projecting the tails like an ancient pennon—that is, when it was put in motion—and waving it aloft, he called out in a loud voice,—

“There, my brave boys ; there is the British flag—deny it who dares !”

The device was an admirable one. The men below who were fighting their way to the ramparts instantly acknowledged the serjeant’s red coat as a legitimate substitute, under all the circumstances, for the British flag, and applauded the non-commissioned officer’s ingenuity by frequent thundering cheers. The coat, in fact, exhibited in this manner and situation, had an electrifying effect upon the troops. It reanimated the flagging, and redoubled the ardour of the forward. It restored that thirst for glory, which the heat of the action, contrary to the effects of heat on all other descriptions of thirst, had in many cases allayed rather than increased, and to all it gave an impulse which nothing could withstand.

To reach Serjeant Dickson’s red coat became an object of proud ambition with the young soldier, and to the veteran a landmark, which it was his duty, if possible, to gain. In short, if the serjeant’s coat was not actually the sole means of gaining the fort, it certainly was the means of accomplishing that end several hours sooner than it would otherwise have been accomplished, and, by consequence, of saving a vast effusion of blood.

It was at this proud moment for Serjeant Dickson—we mean when he was standing on the enemy’s ramparts in his shirt sleeves, and his coat serving a noble purpose, at the top of his halberd, which halberd he held in his hand—that the lieutenant colonel of the regiment came up to him, and said,—

“Serjeant, your behaviour to-day has been most praiseworthy. Glorious, my brave fellow !” exclaimed the colonel in the enthusiasm of the moment, “and it is my duty, and well does it comport with my inclination, to reward your bravery. You shall not require, serjeant, to use your coat as a flag on the next occasion of your gaining the walls of an enemy’s fort. You shall have a real one, serjeant. Ensign Hickeryface has been killed, and I appoint you to succeed him.” Having said this, the colonel took the late Serjeant Dickson kindly by the hand, and wished him joy of his promotion. His officers, one after the other, did the same thing at the colonel’s special request : the latter being desirous to make the circumstances of his installation into his new appointment at once as formal and gratifying as possible. This ceremony over, Ensign Dickson took down his coat and put it on.

Continuing to conduct himself with the same propriety, and when opportunity presented, with the same bravery which had

hitherto distinguished him, Ensign Dickson shortly after obtained a lieutenancy, and ultimately acquired the rank of captain.

At the conclusion of the war, Captain Dickson retired on half-pay to his native place, where he took up his residence in a nice little cottage on the banks of the Nith.

The situation of the captain's cottage was an exceedingly pleasant one, and the society around him excellent. The captain, in truth, had only one decidedly bad neighbour. This was a huge black bull belonging to an adjoining proprietor. He was a most ferocious animal, and the captain had complained to his owner of the circuitous route which the bull frequently compelled him to take in order to avoid a more intimate acquaintance, to which the animal seemed very much disposed. The reader, however, must not imagine that it was altogether fear that induced Captain Dickson thus to avoid him. Not at all. He had courage enough, as his conduct at the taking of the Moro Fort sufficiently proves, to have faced the animal—but he did not see that there was much credit to be gained by fighting a bull; and it was on this ground, and on this ground alone, he declined the combat.

The complaints alluded to, of Captain Dickson, however, to the owner of the formidable quadruped were made in vain; for he was, there's no denying it, though a bad character, an exceedingly handsome brute. There was not his match within, perhaps, a hundred miles of him. So plump, so sleek and glossy—so black, so curly-headed—so thick-necked, and such a pair of horns! He was a perfect picture, and from a window of three stories in height, or any such safe elevation, could not be viewed but with pleasure and admiration.

We have spoken generally of the annoyance which this bull gave to Captain Dickson; but a particular case was when he (the captain) went to a certain favourite pool in the Nith to bathe, which he did every day. On this occasion the animal's vicinity was especially annoying; and it was so, because the captain had then, unless he would go a mile round, to pass through the field in which the bull was kept. When he went to bathe, the captain used to watch until the bull had got to a safe distance in the direction of the upper meadow, his own way lying by the lower. He would then wait until he saw the animal so employed, or so situated, as to render his escape practicable, when he would make a rush across the field—showing the bull the best pair of heels he happened at the time to have in his possession. But it was not Captain Dickson alone who was in the habit of taking the "Bull's Park" (as the piece of ground appropriated to that personage was called), as a short cut. Others did the same thing in traversing the romantic banks of

the Nith, at that particular spot. But it was one not by any means unattended with danger, as the reader will readily believe, and as we will immediately show.

One day, as Captain Dickson was dressing himself after bathing in his favourite pool in the Nith, and just as he had fastened the last button in his waistcoat previously to resuming his coat, he was suddenly alarmed by the most fearful screams and cries. The tones were those of female voices, and their proprietors at no great distance. Such sounds as those alluded to could always call Captain Dickson to the rescue ; but on this occasion he was most especially prompt, as he had no doubt that his old friend the bull was at the bottom of the business. Impressed with this idea, and struck with the horrid and imminent danger he had no doubt the parties were in, the gallant captain, without taking time to put on his coat, rushed to the scene of alarm—and there, to be sure, found his worst fears confirmed. He saw two ladies standing screaming in a corner of the park, and the bull confronting them : he had driven them in there, and there he seemed determined to keep them. Without a moment's thought or hesitation, the hero of the Moro Fort, armed with a huge piece of railing, leaped into the park, and stoutly took up a position between the ladies and the bull ; when the latter, shrinking before the bold front and gallant bearing of the captain, suddenly and very unexpectedly sported the white feather and beat a retreat, though certainly not a hurried one : he retired composedly and in good order. On his departure, the captain advanced to the ladies, one of whom was an exceedingly pretty girl, and having conducted them to a place of safety, smilingly apologised for appearing before them without his coat.

The apology was certainly a very unnecessary one considering the circumstances ; but the captain was naturally an exceedingly polite man, and especially decorous in his conduct towards the ladies. There was, however, assuredly no breach of decorum in this case—at least, none that was not wholly unavoidable—and the ladies told him so. The captain bowed, and said if they would have the goodness to wait for an instant till he went for his coat, he should with much pleasure accompany them home. They told him they were residing with one of his neighbours, naming the gentleman at whose house they were on a visit. Captain Dickson accompanied the ladies home, found the younger an exceedingly pleasant and agreeable creature, and what made matters no worse, with a trifle somewhere about five thousand pounds. Affairs standing in this position, the captain, like a gallant soldier as he was, laid immediate siege to the little heart of Miss Arabella Gardenstone (the young lady's name), and in three weeks after, this same young lady's visiting

cards intimated calls from Mrs. Captain Dickson ; and in that capacity a very excellent and amiable person she proved.

“Bella, my dear,” the captain used to say to his wife frequently, many years after this, “do you recollect that the first time I saw you I was without my coat?”

The captain might have added, and we do not know that he did not, that he had not only got his wife coatless, but almost every thing else ; and that every one of the most important incidents in his life was marked, as the reader well knows, by the same peculiarity. The instance to which we have just represented his alluding was, however, we believe, Captain Dickson's last public appearance in his shirt-sleeves.





THE LOVER'S SEAT.

BY JAMES OLLIER.



HE coast of Northumberland, rugged and iron-bound as it is in various places, yet presents along its extensive range many a spot of picturesque and sometimes even of luxuriant beauty.

We have at present, however, to speak of a romantic, and somewhat wild-looking hollow or valley, disembodying itself towards the sea, and hemmed in, as it were, by lofty masses of cliff on either side, while the background is formed by a sweep of bold unclothed hills. In this valley, thus surrounded and sheltered, lies a little village, which we shall call Seaford. Although but few verdant groves are found about the place, and there is little to challenge admiration from the lovers of rich landscape, yet a contemplative mind would rarely desire a calmer or more befitting retreat. The world might seem to be altogether excluded from it; a sense of deep tranquillity arises from its survey, as well as of repose and comfort; and the inclement winds that bellow from the piercing east can scarcely penetrate across the rocky barrier.

The spire of the ancient church formed a prominent feature, and an ornamental one too, at the time the writer saw it, amidst this deep solitude; and when the bells tolled on each successive Sabbath, to call the rustic population to the house of prayer, their sound swept with such gravity along the vale and over the waters, as to resemble a summons from all the cares and employments of life.

In this secluded hamlet lived, not many years since, a young couple who had learnt of each other the sweet lesson of love. The girl had, in childhood, been deprived by death of her parents, and was brought up by a maiden aunt. The youth, whose friends were among the most respectable of the place, had early manifested a strong disposition for a wild and venturesome career. Often had he left his quiet homestead to engage in some coasting voyage, or to pass whole days and

nights at sea in the pilot-boats that look out for foreign vessels in order to conduct them into harbour.

As Edward Raby grew up, these predilections became more and more strong, notwithstanding they were earnestly discouraged by the anxious parents of the young man, and equally so by that gentle maid who had placed her happiness in his keeping. He at length became connected with a party of smugglers (the retired nature of the coast favouring the pursuits of these men), and was supposed occasionally to join in their enterprises—which, lawless as they were, possessed, for a roving adventurous character like Raby's, a peculiar charm. At the time we refer to, there was not so much restriction (particularly in remote parts) set upon this traffic as nowadays; and the existing enactments were frequently put in requisition to no purpose against individuals whose number and tact enabled them either to elude or defy the prohibitory regulations.

Often—her eyes filled with tears—did poor Mary entreat her lover to abandon these hazardous courses, and gratify the wish of his friends by adopting some creditable calling. He would promise to attend to her request; would vehemently protest that his *next* contraband excursion should be the *last*, but that fidelity to his comrades, and regard for his pledged word, forbade his abstaining from the approaching rendezvous.

Alas! Edward's promises were kept to his lawless associates, and broken (from the force of habit rather than intentional ill-faith) to her who had the best right to claim their fulfilment. In fact, his native hamlet could no longer detain him, when perchance a vessel heavily laden tempted to enterprise. The boat that bore his comrades and himself would quickly be alongside the Indiaman, all eyes sparkling with delight as the bales of voluptuous silk were spread, together with other products of distant lands. A French ship, too, occasionally yielded a silken harvest; while at other times appeared a galliot loaded with the finest spirits. Frequently, at night, echoed the peaceful sands with the sudden noise of rolling casks, which were primarily deposited in adjoining fissures of the rock.

The natural consequence of Raby's participation in such deeds at last manifested itself. They could not be carried on without some peril; a slight skirmish or two took place with the revenue officers; and Edward having distinguished himself therein, became a marked man. He therefore felt it necessary to abandon his home, and trust wholly for support to the precarious trade he had chosen.

Nothing, however, could subdue poor Mary's long-cherished affection for the rash adventurer. All efforts—and they were lavishly made—proved unavailing to erase his image from her heart. She bore each gibe and sneer with unreplying patience;

and now that Edward no longer returned home, kept tryst with him at a particular place on the neighbouring cliff.

Upon this spot, which was not reached without some difficulty either from the shore below or summit above, Nature had hewn in the rock a rough kind of seat, whereon the devoted girl would, gazing over the watery waste before her, await her lover—secure in that almost inaccessible place, from overlooking or surprise. Here would she sometimes linger till evening, and even night approached, in the hope of seeing her betrothed, and confident that, while he respected little else, he still respected her. Here, too, when all around was wrapt in profound silence, and labouring clouds invested the firmament, she more than once heard a wild harmony arise upon the waters, fitted to words such as the following :

THE SMUGGLERS' CHANT.

When darkness shrouds the heavy sky,
And prosy mortals snoring lie,
On the wide sea, awake are we,
Each sinew strung to industry.
Our minds with busy hopes are rife;
Ho, ho ! bravo ! for the smuggler's life.

No moon, no moon !—with prying light
To put to shame the friendly night :
Sworn foes of day, we only pray
For deepest shade or faintest ray.
We court not, though we fear not, strife ;
Ho, ho ! bravo ! for the smuggler's life.

Our freight full many a maid shall share,
And thirsty souls that laugh at care ;
Our silk 's a dower, our kegs of power—
We must not lose the lucky hour !
Expects us many an anxious wife ;
Ho, ho ! bravo ! for the smuggler's life.

Now—pull, my lads ! the well-known creek—
With muffled oars its entrance seek ;
Ashore, and we—our cargo free—
Shall soon exult with triple glee.
How sweet the joys the daring know ;
Huzza ! for the smuggler's life, bravo !

The ill-starred maiden would sigh as these strains, with a sort of half-checked uproariousness, reached her ear. They would probably, from the distance, be unmarked by any other ; but in Mary's case, every physical sense was wound up to a pitch of

intense acuteness. She had most likely, too, heard the wild ditty hummed by her lover while they were in company together, and hence easily recognised it. Alas ! it spoke to her of aught but joyousness : of peril—of shame—of death !

Meanwhile, a considerable alteration became evident in the young woman ; the proportions of her well-shaped person had lost their becoming roundness and symmetry : she grew thin and haggard. Her manners, too, were changed : from the laughing, open-hearted, confiding girl, she had passed into a morose, suspicious, despondent individual, in whom the principle of hope seemed rapidly waning ; and in consequence of dwelling continually on one idea, there was reason to apprehend that her intellect would lose much of its original activity and sharpness. During the day she worked hard at her needle, and every evening, as the sun gilded with his last rays the expansive ocean, repaired to her favourite seat upon the cliff.

How powerful is love !—which could lead an otherwise timid girl daily to brave not only the loneliness of the situation, but the labour, from which many shrank, of the ascent. The ledge of rock whereon the level slab is situated, was then gained by a kind of gully resembling a water-course ; though since (as the spot has become much visited), a sort of winding stair has been formed in the face of the cliff. Once reached, the little rocky nook, with its far-stretching prospect (itself almost hidden), amply repays the toil of the ascent.

One evening, when Mary had for some time taken her usual post, she fancied that, as a darker speck on the dark waters, she could perceive the smugglers' vessel. Gradually it became more and more apparent : the customary strain was wafted across the billows, and, as the boat neared the shore, died away, and was succeeded by deep silence. Mary listened, as was her wont, in almost breathless anxiety : a few minutes longer, and she trusted to hear the wanderer's well-known step and voice, and to have an opportunity of renewing her solemn assurance that, though she never could be another's, she would not consent to unite her hand to Edward's till he should relinquish his illegal courses.

She was startled from her abstraction by the report of a pistol ; she sprang from her seat—another, and another fatal sound succeeded—she shrieked with terror. It was too obvious that the free traders were again intercepted. Mary rushed rather than clomb down the gully. As she approached the beach, she became fully aware of the nature of the scene ; the smugglers were hotly engaged with the revenue officers. Mary, however, had thought and eyes but for one. The flashes of the pistols threw an unearthly though intermitting radiance over the conflict ; and by that glare, just as the hapless girl was emerging from the lowest point of the cliff, she beheld her Edward first bound into

the air, then fall like a plummet upon the sands ;—he had been shot through the heart !

Mary was found, on the cessation of the contest, stretched upon the earth in a state of stupor. She was conveyed with humane care to her abode in the village, where the assiduous exertions of her friends succeeded after awhile in restoring her to sensibility, —but reason had for ever fled. She roamed about from that time—dependent upon the charity of the neighbours—without any ostensible object ; but never missed her daily resort to the well-known spot, to look out for her betrothed across the waves.

She continued thus to expect Edward Raby's return even till the hour of her death, which, however, was mercifully not long protracted ;—and the fishermen and others who ply upon that part of the coast, have ever since been accustomed to point with interest and emotion to that lofty crag, which has, from the circumstances we have related, obtained the denomination of **THE LOVER'S SEAT.**





A LEAF FROM THE LIFE OF ALCIBIADES BOND.

IT was a November evening—and an agreeable fog, relieved by a healthy and animating drizzle, seemed to establish our generally admitted claim to purity of atmosphere, which (with the exception, perhaps, of the soft skies of Italy), is the sweetest and loveliest in the scope of Europe. Coaches and cabs were every where in motion—the lights burned dimly in the shops—and a moving roof of umbrellas, shining with wet, and hung round with ever-dropping drops, added an active interest to a scene eminently calculated to suggest to the mind of the philosopher or the philanthropist a train of calm and benevolent sentiments. It is only, indeed, on such an evening, when some huge hand seems, as it were, to be grasping the spongy clouds, and squeezing them deliberately over the heads of our mercurial citizens—when a yellow mist, breathed from the cadaverous jaws of old Father Thames hangs in the air like an universal fit of the jaundice—when a pleasing sense of suffocation swells in the throat—when the soft slush under foot affords easy treading to the weary pedestrian—when rattling wheels bespatter you with mud-spots—and the points of some beneficent creature's umbrella direct their disemboguing waters down the channel of your neck—it is only on such an evening that the sweets of London can be enjoyed in all their perfection, in all their matchless luxury; provided always that the epicurean voluptuary is unencumbered with any cloak, or overhead disqualification, and is exposed without impediment to the free and independent action of the distilling element.

Now at the time of which we speak, with that stolid indifference to the beauties of nature which strongly characterises a great proportion of the sons of men, had Mr. Alcibiades Bond immured himself in his chamber, situated in the rear aspect of a noble mansion somewhere in the vicinity of Fleet-street; or, in other words, in the third floor back—to communicate with which, Mr. Bond's visitors were solemnly enjoined to ring the second bell on the right hand twice. This direction was not altogether superfluous, since there were three other agents of intercourse on the same side of the door; one announcing its rea-

diness to summon "Thomas Buckle, Bootmaker," another, "Miss Elizabeth Piff, Dressmaker," while the remaining two modestly performed their duties anonymously, the lower invoking our friend Alcibiades, leaving to the upper the task of notifying by many and mysterious signs, to a whole tribe of distinct tenants who occupied the more exalted apartments, the presence of some person requiring their appearance below.

With other thoughts than those of this world was Alcibiades sitting, with his hands upon his knees, and his legs outstretched and resting on the sides of the fireplace.—With other thoughts than this sublunary nature can inspire was our hero etherealising, when a knock came at the door—and casting aside his redundant locks, he strode to the latch, and admitted a person of tall stature, with a hat on his head, and a desperate instrument in his right hand, which, upon more minute inspection, proved to be nothing else than a walking-stick. His nose was long and pointed, and firmly established in the middle of his face; his eyes were set at equal distances on either side of his nose, and his mouth seemed capable of executing terrific deeds upon the mangled victims of the culinary inquisition. There was something in the expression of his eye that denoted a brooding spirit, and the basiliskish gaze of the sagacious physiognomist might easily have discovered in the workings of his countenance a disposition not patiently to endure what it was possible to avoid; while the no less acute phrenologist might have perceived the fact, that there were few circumstances powerful enough to prevail on him to decline the gratuitous offer of a five-pound note. Dark and various passions beclouded his brow; a deeply-rooted disrelish for things he did not like, and a bitter antipathy to everything that did not agree with him. He was evidently one of those moody spirits that make the best of a bad bargain, and wrap themselves up in the wild theories of that neoteric philosophy, that considers the miseries of human life the least agreeable part of it, and entertains the curious hypothesis that there is something more than chimerical in the mysterious fascination of a boiled leg and trimmings.

Such was the man who now introduced himself to Mr. Bond; but since, as far as we know, he has nothing whatever at present to do with the narrative before us, we shall leave him in the enjoyment of his own obscurity, and return to our hero, merely remarking, that the name of the individual was Grimshaw—Gabriel Grimshaw, and his profession a fancy flower manufacturer.

Alcibiades Bond, to affirm the truth of him, was diligent in a calling requiring very great manipular dexterity to keep together the animal functions, yet a calling of some consequence in the world notwithstanding; he was a law-writer; and somewhere in

the neighbourhood of Quality-court was to be seen occasionally exercising his skill with much avidity, marking down, between the intervals arising from a sheet completed and another to be begun, the fractional sum to be set to his account, partly with a view of acquiring consolation for the past, and partly of encouraging himself for the future. The fallow visages of the persons around him appeared to have extracted their hue from the parchment over which they were stretched, and which presented about as much of the woolly commodity that had once adorned it, as the forlorn vestments of the several occupants of this legal lazaretto could unitedly have contributed. But it was evident from the smile of self-satisfaction that flickered every now and then upon the cheek of Mr. Bond, that his spirit was by no means concerned in his employment, but that some other thing or creature was engrossing his attention while he was engrossing the deeds and instruments. Some little light might be thrown upon this mystery by reference to a sheet of foolscap that lay beside him, serviceable as a medium through which the particular character of a pen might be instantly determined, but much defaced by flourishes and scrawls, suggested apparently by the calligraphic genius of the imaginative Bond. It was to be observed that the words "dearest," "fondest," "sweetest," "love," "hope," "madness," and the like, were the prevailing choice of his quill, and that an attempt had been made to commit a sonnet, but the muse having suddenly withdrawn her patronage, the author had proceeded no further than—"Oh ! my heart—"

The fact is, the too susceptible Alcibiades had been beguiled by the irresistible charms of a young damsel into the Serbonian bog of love, where he was just then hopelessly and recklessly floundering about, to his own discomfort, and the infinite entertainment of his friends. To chance was he chiefly indebted for the pleasing torture of the divine passion ; for one day as he was hastily moving one leg before another in the south-western suburbs, his whole frame was suddenly electrified by the appearance of a terrestrial seraph, who leaning from a window, was innocently absorbed by the romantic gambols of Punch and Judy, that were executing their intensely-interesting feats before her very door. A smile was meandering over her cheek, and the rosy hue of sweet delight beamed from her inexpressibly beautiful countenance. Her eyes were earnestly fixed upon the entrancing spectacle, while her fingers beat time to the melodious duet of tabor and of pipe. Alcibiades was struck with astonished admiration at the sight of the bewitching sylph, superintending, as it were, the merry festivities of her woodland spirits, and he gazed and gazed till his heart received the unavoidable impression of her looks—and he loved !

"What were the world, with a being such as that to cheer and

solace one," thought Bond ;—"a paradise ! Yes, nothing could distract the even current of my way if she were mine. I could meet the opposition of malignity and hate with a resolute front, and cast aside the impediments of life." He was about to proceed with his cogitation, when, turning suddenly, the point of some massive substance came violently in contact with the extremity of his nose, and a cry of anguish, loud and shrill, burst from the bosom of Alcibiades, as he raised both hands to the damaged member with a view of determining the actual amount of injury sustained by that organ.

"Mind your eye ; hope I didn't hurt you !" cried a fellow with a ladder on his shoulder, casting a leer at some persons who appeared to be enjoying the joke.

"Hateful barbarian !" murmured Alcibiades Bond, not deigning a reply ; and looking up at the same moment, he detected his angel in the first floor in the act of uncontrollable laughter, and evidently *at him*.

Merciful Heavens ! could it be that a creature so fair was really entertained at the misfortunes of her fellows ? The very shadow of such a suspicion turned the heart of Alcibiades sick within him, and he proceeded on his way with feelings of mingled hope, despair, delight, and mortification.

The ways of love are strange, and marvellous are those springs that put into action the mental fantoccini of hopes and fears that dance about the bosom of a bewildered inamorato. First comes a little figure all bedecked in gaiety, and that is Hope, and it springs and capers about the regions of the heart with uncommon diligence, until in the middle of its fun, in comes a grave character, and that is Despair, and the latter forthwith knocks the former personage on the head, and commences another scene of fantastic madness. Fancy, in the turning of a thought, trips up the heels of this old beldame, and up she gets and hobbles into invisibility, leaving the stage open to the performance of a troop of heterogeneous and particoloured ruffians, half begotten of confidence, half of uncertainty, who begin to kick and plunge about after such a frantic and curious fashion, that the unhappy wretch upon whom they are billeted stands an excellent chance of becoming as mad as they, unless, with timely resolution, he dismisses the capricious deity of love himself, and soon will then depart his vexatious attendants.

Thus was it with Alcibiades Bond. He feared that the object of his flame was hard-hearted, yet he hoped she was not. He, nevertheless, determined to see her again ; and on the following evening, having bedizened himself to the best of his ability (a matter that required no little ingenuity), he sallied forth, and directed his steps to the vicinity of his fair one's dwelling. He saw her, yes, he passed the house several times, and she noticed

him, but not with that emphatic glance that put beyond doubt the fact of her reciprocated ardour. Alcibiades, however, knew the ways of women too well to expect an unmistakable demonstration of her affection at that early stage of their connexion.

Again and again he glided by the door, and stood at the end of the adjoining street ; till at length he bethought himself to make an experiment on her feelings. Pretending to be going, therefore, he hastily turned the corner, but shortly returned, and watched the effect of this manœuvre. It was most successful ; for in a minute afterwards, a head was slowly projected from the window with cautious curiosity ;—and looking anxiously towards the spot where Alcibiades might have been supposed to have vanished, like the evening moon, fresh and beauteous, was his mistress displayed to his delighted vision. The next moment the head was suddenly withdrawn, and all was dark again.

Every thing was now in an altered situation. The world began to appear to Alcibiades a place of blessedness and delight, and with what exultation of heart he tripped home again, we leave to the imagination of such of our readers as have revelled in the ecstasy of similar sensations. Doubt and fear received full marching orders ; and love and joy, with colours flying, took easy possession of the garrison of Mr. Bond's bosom. The slight protrusion of that head changed the whole face of things. The event was of momentous interest. How could there be a more unequivocal symptom of unrestrainable regard ?

Filled with that rapture which a lover only knows, Alcibiades hurried through the streets, so wrapt in his own fancies that he noticed neither place nor person. He leaped, he ran, he flew ; he seemed to rise above the earth, and to walk upon the unsteady-footing of the air. His soul was too full for words, and he longed to throw forth the feelings of his heart upon a sheet of Bath post, gilt-edged, and dedicate them to the amiable origin of all his happiness. A letter was forthwith concocted, and, on the morrow, with feet more light than the flying heels of Mercury, he stuck his epistle in his pocket, and hastened to his "lady love."

Fortune was, in every respect, in his favour ; for scarcely had he reached the romantic street, when he perceived the angel herself just entering the gate that opened into a sort of little garden before the fairy palace of her abode. With the velocity of lightning flew Alcibiades to possess her of his amorous note, but with a sudden start she fled precipitately within the protection of the railings, and drew the bolt after her.

"My sweetest !" exclaimed the impassioned suitor, placing both his hands upon the top of the gate, and gazing at the maiden like a love-sick kangaroo—"my sweetest !" But his tongue re-

fused to articulate the dictates of his soul, and he remained, with his mouth half-open, in the attitude of one deprived suddenly of the faculty of speech.

"Oh! go away. Mr. Thompson don't live here," said the damsel, nodding her head significantly: "there's no such person here."

"Mr. Thompson!" gasped Alcibiades in a cloud of bewilderment—"Mr. Thompson!"

"Yes, it's no use, I know you," added the incomprehensible virgin.

"No use—know me?" stammered Bond, as the closing of the door apprised him that the fair mystery had escaped into her habitation. "No use! This is remarkably strange; what *can* it mean? Sly rogue, it's some trick of hers, I know it is;" thought Alcibiades, attempting in vain to pierce through the misty secret that enveloped the proceedings of his love. But his troubled spirit was soon relieved by the appearance of his enchanter at the window again,—and his heart began to beat with renewed impulses of satisfaction, when he reflected upon those strange agencies by which deep attachments endeavour to communicate their passion, and the inscrutable methods by love adopted to make known its sufferings and hopes. With these thoughts he started into a kind of canter, and running through the exquisite melody,

"Oh! there's nothing half so sweet in life
As love's young dream,"

he disappeared in the distance, and was lost to the eyes of his enamoured mistress, who doubtless pined in the same gentle melancholy as did Ariadne for her runaway Theseus.

Of little avail was it that for many hours Alcibiades sought the god of sleep on the night of that eventful day, for that capricious deity unequivocally declined the most pressing invitation to visit his restless pillow. His mind was oppressed with many and conflicting meditations. "Mr. Thompson *don't* live here." What *could* be the meaning of that? Could it be she was married, and her husband happened to be one of those convenient gentlemen called a traveller? a description of persons who add to their migratory dispositions the marvellous gift of total invisibility, being never to be seen on any occasion whatever, but who seem to enter into the holy state of wedlock for no other reason than to accommodate the lady folk with a matrimonial name. Bond shuddered at the thought. Married! his heart palpitated with apprehension at the bare suggestion, and he grasped the bed clothes with convulsive agony when he contemplated the possibility of such a disaster.

No, it could not be so, and events proved his alarm unfounded ; for more than once on his subsequent pilgrimages to the shrine of his affection he saw a tall, lank, elderly personage admitted within the precincts of the fair damsel's dwelling ; and the long iron-gray locks descending from his hat behind, indicated experience and years, and left no doubt in Bond's mind that this meagre but highly respectable individual was her happy parent.

It cannot be expected Alcibiades was betrayed into none of the frantic symptoms of that idiotic visitation called love. On the contrary, he walked about with a vague and staring countenance, his eyes gazing on vacancy, and his limbs absurdly arrayed in incompatible articles of apparel. His reason wandered far away, and, without thought, he thrust his misguided shanks into the armholes of his coat instead of his pantaloons ; brushed his hair with a pewter spoon ; shovelled up a pair of kittens, and consigned them to the furnace instead of coals ; shaved off one side of his cheek instead of his whisker ; and was observed to cram into his mouth (so lost was he in the mazes of fancy) a slice of the very best yellow soap instead of a fragment of a French roll.

These feats may serve, possibly, to manifest the pitiful condition into which our friend was thus plunged, but he had given way to the soft tyrant too far to admit of his reassuming the reins of self-government. The faithful stars were silent witnesses to his truth ; for every night he circumambulated about the citadel where his fair one was confined, and made the echoes clamorous with his sorrows. His heart was racked with a continual earthquake, and sighs burst forth from his agitated bosom, as do, in our childish days, pellets from a popgun.

But with all his griefs (and he had many), inexpressible joys were sometimes his companions, and his rapture may be imagined, when, in one of his nocturnal wanderings, he discovered a passage leading to the back part of the house, and revealing to his enamoured eyes the sacred regions of Miss *Thompson's* bed-room. A light was burning in the apartment, and on the curtains a shadow was to be seen as of a human being employed in some ingenious occupation. The arms of the person, whoever it was, were being thrown about somewhat wildly, but the agitation of the limbs soon abated, and a more composed action was to be observed. "Surely, it must be my love curling her hair before she retires to rest," cried Alcibiades, heaving a sob of delightful anguish, and looking up to the chamber-window ; "it must be," and another sigh broke through his bosom, like the north-east wind through a turnip-field.

Oh ! with what quick and sensitive fancy did he picture to himself the sweet divinity imprisoning her beauteous locks in

the soft bondage of white-brown, her eyes half-closed by the fingers of weariness, and her mouth occasionally disported by pleasing pandiculations. His mind became gradually excited to a spirit of enterprise, and he surveyed the paling that stood between himself and an easy access to his darling's presence with the eye of a hero meditating some desperate exploit. He looked again, and difficulty fled affrighted.

"Could I but speak one word to her now," thought Alcibiades Bond, peeping through the railings and attempting to discover what agents of assistance might probably present themselves, should he succeed in scaling the first impediment. "One word would explain everything. A moment would serve to throw my bleeding heart into her lap, and I would tell her to let it live or die in her love or hate—be happy or miserable as her decision was kind or cruel. She has never heard the profession of my attachment yet. I will essay it; yes, I will invite the best or dare the worst at once!" and he sprang from the earth, and was soon on the other side of the preliminary obstacle; not, however, without sustaining a severe disruption of his nether habiliments, which, catching some evil-intentioned spike, were mortally rent in the most vulnerable part.

Such casualties, however, are nothing to the valiant, and he forthwith projected further schemes to elevate himself to the point of his impassioned hopes. A sort of small kitchen with a slanting roof was yet to be surmounted. Where was the method? Once so far, and he could reach the darling window with his outstretched hand. The water-spout, in this emergency, with praiseworthy promptitude, volunteered its assistance, and silently and steadily Alcibiades coiled himself about it, and crept upon the tiles with the skill of a marmoset. Joy and exultation began to flutter in his soul, for he was already within a hair's breadth of his beloved. His heart beat tenderly, and he felt delight even to his fingers' ends. A few steps, and the prize would be won. Sweet thought! entrancing contemplation! and he moved one foot forward; but

"Oh! who can tell how hard it is to climb"

the sloping surface of most treacherous slate? He moved, but at that moment the malignant house-dog set up a hideous yelping, and startled him from his purpose. Too truly,

"It was that fatal and perfidious *bark*
That sank so low that sacred head of thine!"

for, taking fright at the detestable clamour of the vociferous beast, a panic seized him—his legs and the tiles gave way together—his courage went one way, his hat another—and with a

shriek of terror that carried dismay to the utmost caves of night, down he came huddling from his imperious eminence, and pitched into a water-butt. Up went Miss Thompson's window; forth from his watery repository struggled Alcibiades Bond; fear was in the eye of the former—unfeigned grief, mortification, and madness in the countenance of the latter.

"Oh mercy! papa, papa, it's the man, it's the man!" screamed the angel of Bond's idolatry, as she fled from the window, leaving the enamoured Alcibiades in the act of tearing over the palings, with the same heedless velocity and total abandonment of everything like grace and decorum that sometimes characterises the motions of one pursued by a mad bull, or urges into amazed activity the lagging paces of some night-wanderer suddenly saluted by a bony ghost or importunate spectre.

Drenched and disheartened, our hero arrived at his lodgings, his limbs shivering and his teeth chattering with the cold lavation to which he had been so shamefully subjected. The fire was out, and the tinder refused ignition. A complication of miseries seemed to set in against him, and he slunk into his parlour a melancholy, wretched, and unfriended man.

The morning arose in all its beauty; the hope and courage of Alcibiades arose with it. "I will have an explanation," said he. "I will see her father, and reveal to him the agony of my heart. If he reject me, I'll strive to forget her; yet *that* can never be: oh never! I'll die, die, die, and my last breath shall sigh thy name, unkind, unjust, ungenerous Miss Thompson! Die? No, no, I'll live, and revenge her flinty-hearted obduracy by marrying a duchess. There are many that would have me, *I* know," and he cast a glance at himself in the glass, which reflected back a physiognomy little calculated to lead to any such desirable end, but apparently quite satisfactory to Alcibiades himself.

Calamities, however, still followed close at the heels of the sensitive Bond. By accident he met Mr. Thompson, the parent of his marvellous mistress. "Mr. Thompson, I believe," said Alcibiades, approaching him with a bow; but instead of answering him with that courtesy which the manner of his salute demanded, the face of the ancient gentleman underwent the most ghastly distortions, his eyebrows raised themselves as well as his hands, his eyes became wild and fixed, his mouth stood ajar, and his low tremulous voice, rising gradually into a shrill and whistling note, broke out at length into a cry of utter wretchedness and despair. "Eh! oh! I'm ruined," exclaimed the old man, and turning his back upon Alcibiades, he took to flight with such wondrous precipitancy, that the rapidity of his motion was not less perplexing than the cause was mysterious.

"Poor man! he is, mayhap, insane," said the benevolent Bond,

"and may do injury to himself. Let me pursue him, and restore him in security to his fair daughter's arms, and, by that means, open a way to the same asylum for myself;" and with the light and bounding activity of an antelope, Alcibiades set off at full gallop after the distraught parent of his too inflexible Dulcinea. Away went Mr. Thompson, glaring behind him, his antiquated limbs stretching themselves over the land with curious dexterity, and his hands upraised in panic and amazement. At no great distance came Alcibiades following, crying aloud, "Stop him, stop him! He is mad, he is mad!" But the world seemed deaf to his shouts, till a baker, rushing from his shop, seized the old man, and was about to render him up to his pursuer, when suddenly, something having passed between them, he released the naniac again, saying, as the miserable parent went, "Go it, go it!"

"Co it!" meditated Alcibiades, when he reached his home. "For what was I designed but to be a butt—a target for the shafts of fortune. An inscrutable doom attends me—a persecuting riddle. Ten times happier should I be if I could make out the meaning of all this. An explanation, however, I will have, 'f I die in the attempt!"

Soon came an opportunity;—there was Mr. Thompson as sure as a gun; and who—yes—Miss Thompson at his side; they were taking an evening walk. Alcibiades felt assured the moment was at length arrived to make or destroy him for ever. "I will accost them," said he; and he did.

"Mr Thompson," commenced Bond, advancing towards them.

"That's my name," replied the old man, with a benevolent smile on his face.

"I am sorry," pursued Bond, "that a circumstance——"

"Oh, no matter!" interrupted the old man; "it was your duty, you know: don't distress yourself."

"My duty?" exclaimed Alcibiades with some astonishment, mitigated, however, by his conviction that the old man was hopelessly insane—and casting a sagacious look towards the young lady, intended to convey his perfect understanding of her father's complaint—"My duty, Sir!"

"To be sure; to be sure! Every man to his business. But let me tell you I have settled with Mr. Huffleborough."

"Mr. Huffleborough!" cried Bond.

"Bill and costs!" said the old man triumphantly.

"How melancholy!" whispered Alcibiades aside; adding aloud, "I am glad to hear it, Sir."

"Yes, yes; no doubt: but however much I might relish your society in any other capacity, I hope your visits to my house will everlastingly cease. I have done with you, thank Heaven."

"You reject me then?" groaned Bond.

"With the greatest pleasure," replied Mr. Thompson.

"And your daughter?" sighed Alcibiades.

"Will gladly find herself relieved from the disagreeable ubiquity of a bailiff," returned the father.

"A bailiff, Sir! Heavens! a bailiff!" vociferated the lover. "Sir—sweet girl—is it possible you have mistaken me for a bailiff? Misery, misery!" and he took off his gloves, and wrung his hands in agony.

"Are you not?" enquired the parent.

"Oh, ask not the question! No—no—I am not! Can I believe those sweet attentions I once thought—fool, fool—the sweet effects of love, sprung only from the vigilance necessary to counteract the stratagems of—oh! the word! I cannot speak it.—Farewell—farewell—for ever—for ever!" and he turned away hastily, and was quickly out of sight.

"Buy a piping bullfinch, Sir!" was the first series of sounds that awoke the heart-broken Alcibiades to a sense of external nature; and on surveying the individual from whom the words emanated, he perceived a person with a bird on his finger, who repeated forthwith the same interrogatory.

"Bullfinch! d—— your piping bullfinch!" replied Bond with unaccustomed violence, pushing by the personage disdainfully. "The world is against me!" soliloquised he as he went. "I am a doomed one, and the only alternative left me is an appeal to the razor!" and this train of thoughts brought him to the door of his lodging.

"Ah! Bond," said a voice as he entered his room, "I have been waiting for you;" and Alcibiades was not long in discovering that the voice was the hereditary property of his acquaintance Grimshaw.

"I am going to be married," continued the same person. "True love—runaway match—will you give away the bride? Famous dinner, and so on."

"Anything," replied the distracted young man, sitting down and commencing the history of his griefs, which were not destined to terminate there.

An appointment for the following morning concluded the audience between these two worthies, and at the time specified Alcibiades stood upon the fifth step leading to the church-porch, one hand resting with a melancholy air in his bosom, and the other buried in his breeches-pocket. The quarters chimed one after the other, but the bridal party arrived not. The rattling of a hackney-coach aroused our hero from a deep reverie, and the arms of an individual thrust from one of the windows, and shortly afterwards a head distinctly visible, convinced him Grim-

shaw and his love were approaching. In another moment the vehicle drew up, and the shrill sounds from within, with the additional evidence of ribbons of all hues, demonstrated the presence of ladies.

"We are here, you see," said Grimshaw, handing out a fat female, with a green shawl and light-blue gown. "Perhaps you will look to this lady, Bond."

"With pleasure," answered Alcibiades, conducting the lady up the steps ; and the happy couple followed.

The company was soon arranged with the proper accompaniments of clerk, pew-opener and sexton, and the service commenced. The expedition of the movements of the party between alighting from the coach and presenting themselves at the altar, had precluded the possibility of Mr. Bond's obtaining an introduction to the bride, and the ceremony had proceeded to that point when it became necessary he should bestow the lady to the future charge of the anxious swain, ere he caught even a glimpse of her. But sad was that glimpse ! A sound of a piteous nature was heard echoing through the church. The parson ceased—the clerk looked over his spectacles, opened his mouth, and marvelled—the bridegroom started—and all was astonishment. Alcibiades stood confounded ; his heart beat trebly quick ; the whiteness of his face put his shirt collar to shame ; he was a ruined man. That sound had burst from his bewildered heart—for the lady was none other than—Miss Thompson !

Let us not dwell on the miseries of a fellow-creature. Alcibiades Bond still lives ; but though he wears a gladder countenance now—does justice to the usual complement of meals (for he has advanced in the world since this early blight)—sings now and then as he passes along the street—and appears generally as contented as a mortal can expect to be,—the inward worm feeds doubtless in his bosom ; and though he gives promise of existing for many a long year, he will carry, we think, even to the grave, the memory of that disaster. Poor fellow !

Pica.



THE MODERN IACHIMO.

To the trunk again, and shut the spring of it.

CYMBELINE.

THE church-bells of Nottingham were chiming the last quarter to midnight, and the gates of the Crown Hotel had been closed until the morning, when a German phaeton, with curtained windows, flaming lamps, and a fresh relay of horses was lashed by the well-appointed postillions up the steep dark hill, that slopes up from the extremity of the town, and blends with the main road to the capital,—a dense cold mist floated like a sea over the country, and the lights of the city, as they fast retreated behind the whirling of the “chariot wheels,” gleamed palely forth from the shrouding fog, like far-off stars through banks of clouds;—the traveller was partial to nocturnal marching, and felt disappointed at the dreary journey the appearance of the scene preluded; for the rich cultivated landscapes of England, and old towns, hallowed by history and dramatic interest, wear a solemn and Gothic character, if shadowed by the darkness and quietude of a night, when the calm blue azure of the sky throws brightly out the celestial signs and constellations. He drew his furred cloak tightly round his throat, unlocked his pistol-case, caressed his spaniel, who was slumbering on the cushion beside him, and charging the postillions not to abate the present high pressure of speed they forced the horses to, lay back in the vehicle, and tried to forget in sleep both the monotony of the drive, and the importance of the course that was urging him on so rapidly to London.

Mr. Cathcart was a graduate of Oxford, and had recently succeeded to considerable estates, by the unlooked-for disposition of an uncle's will, who had disinherited an only son, in return for a long career of profligacy and disobedience; and had appointed William Cathcart his heir, conferring only on him a life estate, with remainder to his son's children, if the executors considered his course of life sufficiently reformed, to inherit the reversionary benefit and indulgence; otherwise he nominated the governors of a public charity his residuary legatees.

Mr. George Cathcart, the man thus disinherited, was more familiarly known in the halls and saloons of the metropolis, and the Palais Royal, than in the courts of the profession to which he was called. The corps of Legs and Duellists had "marked him as their own ;" and his temper and disposition, in which wit and irony, mirth and cruelty mingled, being never veiled or suppressed, William had been frequently warned against his jealousy and deadly enmity. Hitherto the relatives had never met ; a legal summons had been served on William, requiring his personal attendance in Chancery upon the following day, to be examined in a suit, instituted upon the will ; business of an urgent nature had detained him in Nottinghamshire until the last moment whereto he could procrastinate his departure, and he was now posting express to arrive within the appointed hour, which would punish and chastise his absence by a decision fatal to his rights.

In some little alarm, lest some perverse accident might retard him on the way, or disappoint his hopes of expedition, he had parted from his friends and set off. He might have dozed for an hour (for they had changed horses in the interval), when the sudden change of rate he was moving at disturbed and awoke him—he started and looked round ; the fog had drifted off and the clear night revealed the guiding stars ; a light breeze had sprung up and added a refreshing coolness to the air, which he permitted to enter through the opened window ; from the man who drove the wheelers, he enquired the reason of the slow pace they travelled at. The official of the post touched his hat and gave some evasive answer, in confused and low tones, whose meaning William could not collect,—he looked again at him, and perceived he was not the same individual who had rode the preceding stage, but an ill-countenanced and awkward horseman, who evidently was unaccustomed to the business he was at present employed in, and seemed anxious to conceal his features from Cathcart's view. To a question concerning the reason for this alteration, his interlocutor replied, that the former driver had left at the last inn where they had changed, being taken suddenly ill. "Then why did he not come to me for his fee?" There was a pause. "He did not wish to disturb you, Sir, as you appeared asleep."

He began to suspect there was more mystery and motive in the movement, simple as it was, than they wished him to know or imagine ; and determined, without further observation on the occurrence, to watch their conduct and mutual correspondence vigilantly. Some five miles further were rolled over, when the carriage was abruptly pulled up, and both postillions dismounted together—one of the leaders had picked up a sharp flint, which had cut the hoof deeply and lamed him. "We are but a mile

from Uppingham, Sir ; shall we walk on quietly ?"—"Unlink your leaders from the traces, to remain behind : I will move on with the pair ; and mind you, Sir (pointing to his brace of patent 'locks') no tricks, or double play, with me, or I shall pay you at parting in metal you may not expect. Mount, Sir, and spur on, we are losing time too fast." The vehicle was again in motion, and the dismissed postillion, exchanging a look with his companion, that might be translated "all right," gave a loud whistle from his whip-handle, and galloped down a wooded by-road, that branched into the country, from the high turnpike thoroughfare.

With diminished speed William proceeded on his route, often in anxiety consulting his repeater, and urging with mingled promises and threats the lagging driver ; the night had reached its zenith of darkness, as if asserting one parting effort at supremacy before it abdicated to the day, and the horses, breathless and wearied, with difficulty pulled on the increased load which the defalcation of the leaders obliged them to draw, through a stage exceeding the ordinary number of miles. When near the hamlet of —, at that point where there is an intersection of different roads, opposite an ancient parochial church, he remarked the small lozenge-shaped panes of the windows illuminated, as if reflecting flashes of light which were gradually approaching, and occasionally glancing off their surface. The effect was beautiful and novel ; as the interior of the building, monuments, gallery, and altar, would momentarily be mirrored to the view like a phantasmal picture on a wizard's glass, and then suddenly vanish into the thickest and darkest shadow. Turning to observe whence the light proceeded, he saw that the lamps of a high stanhope, which was driven rapidly down one of the narrow roads, and was now alongside of him, explained the phenomenon and refraction. Two men sat in the gig—they pulled up—their horse was jaded and blown, and had been severely pressed ; the servant, who held the reins, enquired if the night mail had passed them yet. The postillion answered in the affirmative, but Cathcart was unable, from his own knowledge, to contradict the falsehood.

"Are you certain ? quite sure ?" enquired the second stranger, in accents of deep disappointment—a gentleman arrayed in a huge many-caped coat, and intrenched behind a meerschaum.

"Yes, Sir ; the Rocket is now some miles before us, you can never come up with it."

"Then, what on earth am I to do ? I shall be ruined."

Cathcart could not avoid asking the cause of his distress, and offering his assistance.

The gentleman, with many apologies for troubling and interrupting him on his journey, informed him, that he had driven a

long way from his own residence, to meet the London coach, calculating to be in time to catch it as it passed that angle of the road; that the distance and his horse's paces had deceived him, and that he was more uneasy at being detained at so late an hour, in that wild part of the country, on account of having in his gig a large trunk, containing valuable property belonging to a friend about to sail for India, than being disappointed himself of a seat—as he had charged himself with its personal escort up to town, and feared that if it did not reach London by the next day, the lady would be compelled to sail without it.

“What! is there a lady in the case then? If so, we must extricate both you and the trunk. Franklin, look to the size of the chest; is it above bandbox calibre?”

The valet reported it to be the largest and strongest he ever saw packed.

“But can we have it up behind? for you, Sir, Julian—my canine friend here—will, I am sure, vacate his seat. Travellers must not be ceremonious, and I shall be happy to have your society.”

The stranger was most liberal in his thanks, and pressed Cathcart to accept his share of the expenses. This was as liberally declined; the trunk was slung up, and the new acquaintances, in high goodhumour with each other, gave the word and away.

“You see, Sir,” said the stranger, “that travelling brings a man acquainted, not only with strange bedfellows, but also with new postchaise companions. A circumstance somewhat parallel to this meeting, occurred lately to me, when going down from town to Matlock. There was a person sitting in the coach, opposite me, whose appearance and manners at first created a strong prejudice in my mind against him, and I repelled all his attempts to open a conversation; gradually, however, his animated discourse won upon me, and thawed away my dislike. I discovered he was intimately known to some of my friends at Matlock; that night we were formally introduced, dined together, and the hotel being very crowded and scant of accommodation, I actually offered him a share of my room, and my new friend and I slept together, as if we were Nisus and Euryalus revived.”

“Well, Sir, without foreboding so somniferous a conclusion to our adventure, I must congratulate myself at having met so entertaining an ally.”

The stranger bowed, and Cathcart thought he heard him softly soliloquise, “You may know me better, too, before we part.” He treasured in his memory the ambiguous saying, and without manifesting any suspicion, scanned his words and actions closely. The tone of good society was certainly perceptible in

his address; but there was also a boasting arrogance, and a deceitful sneer, which betrayed a connexion with the vicious and abandoned. He put many questions to Cathcart respecting his hurried trip to London, and began to affect great interest in his arriving there in time, and to express his fears that the difficulty in procuring fresh horses along the road would throw them out; minuting accurately the space gone over, and stimulating the postillion to added speed. "Come, Dixon, my luggage is no small weight to keep us back.—Do you find it so?"

The postillion turned round on his saddle, and with a peculiar glance of the eye, merely answered, "No, Sir," and resumed his employment.

Cathcart started—there was an evident understanding between the parties—he deliberated for an instant, and suppressed a fierce emotion of anger that was throbbing to break forth. "Then you know the man, Sir; his name is familiar to your lips; why not openly recognise him before?"

"Is there any thing strange at my not recollecting, until this moment, a person who may have driven me some time since?"

"No matter, Sir, but take care; I can assail as well as assist." And to this strong hint no reply was made.

By the dawning twilight of the morning they could see that the road now wound over a barren common, on which stood a low single-storied house, where poor wayfarers might stop to rest and bait. When the carriage passed its door, there was a sudden crash, one of the wheels had rolled off; the linchpin had given, and the occupants of the body were thrown violently forward and nearly dislodged from their seats. William and his companion immediately alighted and ascertained the cause of the accident. The driver pronounced it impossible to proceed, as an iron had been broken, which would require the interference of a smith to repair, and no forge or wheelwright was within some miles of where they were at present detained. The *sang-froid* of the stranger at this announcement, and the coolness with which he examined the broken axle, struck Cathcart as if the event was not unexpected by him; and he began to suspect he was now the dupe of some premeditated plot, or perhaps deeper scheme, to delay and defeat him. The unseasonable hour, in which no assistance could be called—the lonely situation where he was beset—the twofold odds against him—all rushed upon his mind; but though they awed it, braced it also; he suppressed his suspicions, and calmly addressed the party.

"It seems to me, that either through ignorance or design, a wrong course has been taken; this by-way certainly does not present the features of the great London road, it is too still and untrodden. What say you, Mr. Dixon (as this gentleman has

favoured me with your name) — are you positive we are in the right track ? ”

“ I will not swear we are, I never rode in this line before.”

“ Truth may come out by accident. Then where did you assume the part of postillion for my new acquaintance here, which fixed your name so indelibly on his memory ? Oh, you need not trouble your invention for a lie, as I see you understand your employer’s look to be cautious : but come, be stirring, Dixon, wake up the people of that house, and bring in the luggage ; then push on, and find a workman to right the carriage : and I think the sooner, Sir, *we* part company the better, as you appear to have lost your desire to reach town so early as you lately asserted, on your self-introduction to me.”

“ As you please, I am quite satisfied.”

The postillion cantered on with his horses, and Cathcart moved towards the house. It was a thatched, mean cottage, in slovenly and neglected order, below even the ordinary par of village inns. The broken panes of the ill-painted window, and stove-in panels of the chalk-scored door, proved the riotous yet pauper habits of the characters by whom it was frequented.

“ A dreary hostelry to take one’s ease in,” said Cathcart, as he applied for admission ; “ I hope we shall not be condemned to tarry long in this asylum.” The door was more speedily opened than he reckoned on from the hour, which he supposed would find the inmates asleep. The landlord himself, a bluff, bloated, muscular personage—more resembling a Smithfield “ flesher ” than a jolly Boniface—whose unchanged, disordered dress manifested that he must have reposed in his clothes if he *had* lain down to rest the preceding night—came forth and enquired the cause of this early call, and in what way he could meet their orders. The break-down was explained, and room was ordered for the reception of the luggage, which, with the assistance of the tapster, was carried into the house by Cathcart’s servant. William left his fellow-traveller superintending the removal of the “ traps,” and entered the house to examine the accommodation. A large fire was blazing in the small parlour behind the bar, and the landlady and her *Maritornes*, who seemed to have remained in the same sleepless vigilance as “ mine host,” were engaged in preparing coffee and other requisites for breakfast. The travellers were ushered into two small rooms that communicated with the parlour and each other (if they chose to sleep until their journey could be resumed) : Cathcart, feeling fatigued, chose for himself the apartment nearest the sitting-room, and left for his companion the other, which was more remote and better furnished, and to reach which, it was necessary to pass through his own. He then walked out to acquaint his *élève* with this arrangement, and

when in the hall was surprised to hear Julian barking angrily a continued challenge, and resisting the entreaties of the men to be pacified and silent. He hurried on, and saw his dog circling round and round the stranger's trunk, scenting close to it, and keeping up a low growl of dissatisfaction. Cathcart stopped to view the result of the Montargis alarm and suspicion the animal discovered; the chest was moved nearer to the doorway, the dog still following it with the same hostile uneasiness; the bearer of it looked to Cathcart to interfere, who smiled, and Julian was called in. The dog obeyed his voice, and drawing from the object, crouched at his master's feet, but instantly, on seeing them approach closer, bounded up and returned to the charge.

"It is very strange, Sir," said Cathcart, "to observe the dislike my dog has taken to that chest, doubtless without foundation; however, I must use my interest with him to give a permit for its importation, or your Indian friend's valuables may be injured by heavy rain—I see the clouds are threatening—down Julian! to heel, Sir!"

The entire party now re-entered the house, and the disputed trunk, like the Grecian horse, passed within the walls, and with the remaining baggage was lodged in Cathcart's room. A hasty repast was partaken of, and no sign of the postillion's return being yet exhibited, Cathcart, followed by Julian, withdrew to his room; his companion, who at breakfast had given his name as De Villars, remaining in earnest colloquy with the landlord.

Cathcart's first care was to examine the window-bars, and bolts of the door: they appeared strong and unwrenched, as he essayed and shut them. His own portmanteau and desk were arranged near the low sofa-bed fitted up for his repose, and the chest belonging to De Villars placed beside them. Julian cast his eye upon it on entering; but, as if recollecting his master's prohibition, repressed his dislike, and quietly kept close to him and observed his contemplated movements. Cathcart sat down upon the couch, and looked enquiringly round the room he found himself so unexpectedly lodged in. It was a mean, cold chamber, whose furniture corresponded with its white-washed walls and tiled floor; and he experienced but little inclination to lie down and sleep, through anxiety to proceed, and suspicion of the intentions of the inmates towards him.

Fatigue, however, and want of rest on the past night, were gradually overcoming his vigilance, and his head was drooping on the pillow, when Julian, who had been crouching near him, sprang up as he saw those signs of drowsiness, and grasping his cloak, shook it violently, as if endeavouring to recall him to self-possession. Cathcart's surprise returned; he was aware of the

animal's sagacity, and determined to test it yet again, before he demanded an investigation of the mystery. "Julian certainly does not like that trunk; there may be more intended than meets the eye; however, I will net my betrayer in his own toils. Lie down, Julian, and go to sleep; you must not be turning fashionable and nervous like your master." He then affected to spread his cloak more carefully around him, and reclining at full length, to prepare for a long and settled slumber. The dog gave an uneasy whine, repeated his attempt to disturb, and the moment Cathcart started to his feet, bounded on the trunk, and barked loud and angrily, as if he held an enemy at bay. "Julian's hints shall not be neglected; I must drive a javelin through this portentous disturber of our peace: its owner shall forthwith explain." And unlocking the door, he called to De Villars to enter, who, somewhat disconcerted, drew near—the landlord remaining behind, close enough to listen to the conversation.

"I have rather an extraordinary request to make, Sir: but at the same time it is one to which I shall take no refusal; there is some charm in your trunk, which has inspired my dog with a strong aversion to its sight, and myself with a curiosity equally powerful to see the nature of its contents: I am sure that in return for my courtesy last night, you will have no objection to gratify this innocent inclination."

De Villars grew uneasy beneath Cathcart's stern and defying glance, which contradicted the sneering smoothness of his address.

"The trunk is not my own; and even if it were, I should be just as indisposed to bare my property to you, I may say, impertinent inquisitiveness."

"Your answer is consonant with my expectations; but I shall speak plainly, Sir, and no longer dissemble: I distrust you and your associates; I know that you have seduced me into a snare, and that the villain who drove me, and that other wretch who stands quailing behind you, have been hired and are leagued against me: but you have not prevailed—nor shall exculpate yourself, but by instantly opening that chest: else I shall arrest you where you stand. I am armed, and defy you. Open then, I say; I dare you to do so."

"Dare me to open it! You may fire into it, if you like."

"I take you at your word; I *will* fire into it." De Villars drew back, and his colour changed to a sepulchral paleness: he whispered something to the landlord, who answered in the same tone, "Let him try it, and waste his charge; 'tis ball-proof."

Cathcart now cocked his pistols and presented at the chest, and Julian, motionless, as if setting the first covey of the season, marked, in eager suspense, the result of the trial shot; while

De Villars, steady as if waiting an antagonist's fire and ready to return it, confronted William, and smiled at the fears of the females of the establishment, who, deafened in anticipation by the coming report, were clinging round each other's necks in terror.

Cathcart suddenly lowered his weapon and appealed to De Villars :—"Innocence is always bold, but I have sometimes, too, seen guilt brazen. Now pause before I fire ; for if blood be spilled, the crime be yours—you will not answer me ?—Then bide the event :—one—two—the last number was drowned in the pistol-shot—the lock was forced, the lid dashed open—and in the middle of the sulphurous smoke, Julian had leaped into the chest, and seized the pent-up and prisoned form of a man, who, armed with a dagger and provided with instruments to liberate himself from his ambush, was crouching at the bottom. The apprehended assassin craved his life at Cathcart's hand, who had raised his pistol-handle to strike him down, but on reflection, permitted him to crawl slowly and unmolested from the apartment : but rushing on De Villars, he grasped him by the throat, and brought him fainting to his knee.—"Baffled murderer, I know you now ! It is my cousin George Cathcart I have to thank for this night's entertainment : you are the ingenious manager of this our well-wrought melodrame. A new idea, certainly, to drive into my property in my own phaeton. I regret to have proved such a marplot ; and to compensate for your disappointment, I give you leave to complete the remainder of your journey alone and at *your own* expense ;—you comprehend me. But as your India friend may suffer by the non-appearance of the trunk, I shall certainly convey it myself to town ; and should she unfortunately have sailed, I shall retain it for ever as an 'affectionate pledge' and souvenir of my very kind relative Mr. George Cathcart. And now, 'sweet coz,' adieu.

William, leaving his servant in charge of the carriage, walked on to the next town, and procuring a fresh chaise, by untiring rapidity reached London in time to appear in court. His triumph and elation at his cousin's defeat, satisfied him too well to think of pressing a prosecution ; and a few weeks after, a meeting in Battersea-fields (arising from a quarrel at roulette upon a disputed wager between single and double zero), blotted George Cathcart's name out of the page of existence, and freed his relative William from any suspicion of future attacks upon his life or rights—who never afterwards was known to offer any person, friend or stranger, a seat in his travelling-carriage.



THE GERMAN STUDENT.

CONRAD VON ALTENFELDT was the second son of a nobleman of high birth and connections in the north of Germany, but of fortune small in proportion to the quarterings which blazoned his escutcheon, and to the liberal feelings and generous wishes of his proud but most benevolent heart. He was the father of three children—two sons and a daughter: and for these his divided possessions, at his death, made but slender provision; the elder son, in right of seniority, inheriting of course by far the larger share. Aware of this, the Baron Von Altenfeldt had decided on educating the younger, Conrad, for some profession which might enable him to procure an independence for himself, and thereby prevent his becoming a burden on his brother, when time should have bereft them of a father. In pursuance of this determination, at the usual age the promising and handsome boy was sent from the paternal roof, and entered as a student in the college of Heidelberg, there to commence a course of study which should ultimately open the way to learning, fortune, and honour, in whatever path his future inclinations might prompt him to follow.

Industrious, quick, and tractable, Conrad soon became a favourite with the professors of his college, whilst his gay and open manner, joined to much daring and courage when necessary, rendered him equally liked by his fellow students. At the expiration of a couple of years, Conrad saw himself at the head of a class which was supposed to consist of those young men who held forth the best promise of future talent, and on whom the eyes of the whole university were fixed, as on men destined, when launched into the world, to play a high and distinguished part on its eventful stage. A third year glided peacefully on, and still Conrad pursued with ardour his routine of study, when accident made him acquainted with a young man who had entered the college but a few months, and in a very short space of time had established himself, in the opinion of all, as a person of most profligate and dissipated habits, but at the same time as being possessed of talents of no common

order, and of manners fascinating in the extreme, from their light joyousness and seeming open generosity. Their rooms were contiguous—and soon Conrad Von Altenfeldt and Hans Stolberg were inseparable.

And now the exertions of the young student, in his laborious studies and efforts at distinction, began to relax; hours heretofore entirely devoted to reading and the duties of his college, were dedicated to dissipation, or lost in idle sports, harmless perhaps in themselves, but to be dreaded as leading the unthinking boy still further from those pursuits which had hitherto been his pride, and had bestowed so much happiness on those interested in his welfare. His tutor for a time beheld this defalcation in his favourite pupil with silent grief, only endeavouring to lure him back to wisdom by means so gentle, that the return might appear voluntary—but in vain;—hours of absence were soon lengthened into days—days became weeks—months—until the studio of Professor Von Blumenbach was altogether deserted.

Longer silence would have been criminal; therefore one morning—a morning following a night that had been passed in more than wonted revelry (for vice had been added to folly)—the professor entered the bed-chamber of the exhausted Conrad: unreservedly he spoke of the sorrow he experienced in witnessing an almost total blight of that harvest of talent the first years of Conrad's residence at Heidelberg had promised—adverted to his parents, and spoke of the bitterness of their disappointment; in short, drew so forcible and yet so true a picture of the fatal end Conrad was preparing for himself in thus wasting time, abilities, and wealth, that the penitent boy determined he would henceforth chase the companions of his idle hours, and endeavour again to draw around him those young men whom, by his late follies, he had almost entirely estranged.

First on his list of friends had formerly stood Louis Wallenstein, son of a much-esteemed companion in arms of Conrad's father, who was the proprietor of a large domain in the immediate neighbourhood of the town of Heidelberg. There had some of Conrad's happiest hours been passed; there in the society of the sisters of his friend;—they were young innocent girls, brought up in all the strict propriety of a German province, of sweet and simple manners, and possessing a great portion of personal beauty, particularly the eldest—at least so thought Conrad. Suzeline was about seventeen, tall and delicately formed, and gifted with that dazzling clearness of complexion and profusion of fair hair, which renders most of the German girls so peculiarly pretty.

The chosen friend of her brother, and his frequent guest at Wallenstein,—Suzeline could not long remain insensible to the

evident love of Conrad. Their mutual affection was confessed, and with the consent of either family they were considered as betrothed.

So matters stood when Hans Stolberg became the corrupter of the hitherto virtuous Conrad. Few now became his visits at Wallenstein; and Suzeline, warned by her anxious brother of the course Conrad was pursuing, received him, when he did seek her, with coldness, or with tears and reproaches but ill-brooked by the now intemperate youth, who, courted, flattered, and caressed by those who were leading him fast on to ruin, almost forgot in their society the love he owed his betrothed, or thought of it only as a clog and interruption to pleasures dazzling and intoxicating, but which concealed a path tending to the inevitable destruction of both body and soul.

As Blumenbach left his room, all this occurred to his mind with most painful accuracy, and he could not conceal from himself that he had wantonly forfeited the approbation of the worthy tutor, the friendship of Wallenstein, and the love of the gentle Suzeline.

The whole of that wretched day he tossed on his feverish pillow, with aching head and bursting heart; cursing his own folly and the vice of others, and firmly determining to lead a better course of life for the future.

Towards evening, the cool breeze and a rich setting sun tempted him from his chamber, and he went forth to walk; choosing the most unfrequented paths—fearful of encountering, in the more busy city, those young men, who would endeavour to enlist him in some plan of debauchery for the night. Lost in thought, and unmindful of his steps, he at length found himself, as twilight closed around him, in a retired part of those beautiful grounds which surround the stupendous ruins of the Castle of Heidelberg. Fatigued mentally and bodily, he threw himself on the cool refreshing turf; whilst the moon, now rising in an almost cloudless sky, streamed brightly on him through the archway which still stands to commemorate the ostentatious love of that monarch who once there “held sway.”

In the stillness of that beautiful evening he ruminated on the sage counsels of the good old Blumenbach, the repeated warnings of the friendly Wallenstein, and the gentle repinings of the lovely Suzeline. As these thoughts crossed his mind he wondered he could have allowed Hans Stolberg thus to engross him; yet owning that hours passed with that extraordinary man and his dissolute companions had not been deficient in delight. “How is it,” mentally asked the captious boy, “that almost all in this world we hail as pleasure, we are told is just what, as prudent youths, we ought most to shun?—Lovely woman, rich wine, fellowship with the gay and joyous—in short, all that ex-

cites and sets the mantling blood swelling through our veins, in that warm full tide which almost makes us forget our humanity, and gives an insight into joys old legends tell us were the privileges of the gods alone. How is it, that all this we are to forego—for what? To pore over musty books, or listen to the drone of some aged kill-joy; and, in our turn, to become as wise and crabbed, and equally skilled in curbing and curtailing the pleasures of buoyant youth. By yon moon which now looks on me so mildly and modestly, I feel more than half inclined to throw off all restraint, drink my fill of pleasure, *and then*—ay, there it is—who can solve that?—*and then*—it is that thought which startles and restrains those not lost to all!—no—I feel I am not formed to be an entire villain; neither have I moral courage sufficient to keep me in the narrow path of virtue—but shall crawl through life a compound wise man will not trust, and one whom rogues will find a stumblingblock in their way. Still, I must now make a selection:—on the one hand fame, riches, and honour, with sweet Suzeline, await me; but to be earned with toil and self-denial:—whilst on the other, stand ready for my acceptance, intoxicating delights, hours free and uncontrolled—ecstatic joys, and Eleonora—the soul-entrancing Eleonora! Oh, that I possessed but the power of uniting these joys; by day, study, prudence, virtue, and Suzeline—by night, wine, gaiety, forgetfulness, and Eleonora! Oh, that I had the magic power of combining all this!”

“I will give you that power,” was whispered in silvery tones close to his ear.

“Who speaks?” asked the student, startled at thus hearing his very thoughts replied to, and looking hastily around him in expectation of seeing he knew not what.

“I spoke,” again sounded in his ear. “It is hopeless to expect to see me; but listen and profit. I know the subject of your inmost thoughts, and entirely sympathise with you as to the reasonableness of your complaint, which resolves itself simply into thus much—you would have the outward seeming of a most virtuous man, would rise to fame, wealth, and honour, and take a virtuous wife to your bosom—whilst, in fact, you are an unprincipled profligate, and would revel in every forbidden pleasure—ha-ha-ha! Nay, start not; you see I read your mind aright. Now, the means of being with impunity this consummate hypocrite I will empower you to obtain, under certain trifling conditions. Now fancy not that I am Lucifer himself, which your scared looks declare to be the case. I want not your soul, young man: only lend me your person, and I am content. No, I am not that exquisite Prince of Darkness; I am only a wandering spirit, unfortunately imbued with mortal passions without the power, as a mortal, of satisfying them. I

began my fanciful existence in the half-crazed brain of a metaphysician, who put out all his capabilities towards producing, in this world of yours, the perfectibility of human nature ; in furtherance of which, and as an example, I suppose, to his proteolytes, he led a life that would have shocked an American savage ; and at the height of one of the orgies celebrated by him and his neophytes, I sprang into my mystery of being—invisible, incorporeal, but yet retaining so much of the spirit of my progenitor, that I burn to engage in mortal life. Now, boy, listen ; for this is the pact I would form with you. You lamented, but saw the incompatibility, of a life of what is called pleasure and a life of virtue. Now, I can, if so you will, enable you to quaff to the very bottom the intoxicating draught you thirst for ; I will fulfil your every wish from sunrise till sunset,—if, in return, you will allow my immaterial essence to inhabit the grosser materials which compose your body, consenting to lose all control over your actions though retaining perfect consciousness ; and then, young Sir, from sunset until sunrise you shall taste delights your dull mind has never dreamed of, not even in the society of your brilliant fascinating Eleonora, or of that purer goddess of your love, sweet Suzeline.”

Conrad, with all the impetuosity of youth, was on the point of closing with this specious and wicked compact, when voices, calling on his name, sounded through the garden, and, in the next moment, a form rushed through the archway, and Conrad was locked in the embrace of his brother. Every thought and every feeling was now absorbed in pleasure at this most unexpected meeting ; and as the brothers, arm linked in arm, returned to the city, home and all its delights were vividly recalled to the recollection of the younger, by the affectionate conversation of the elder. Soon seated in Conrad's little study, their communications became still more unreserved, and Hubert adverted, though with feeling and delicacy, to the late falling off of Conrad from the paths of virtue and of duty.

“ If you could see the grief of our dear mother, Conrad, or know the mortification your conduct has occasioned our now aged father, I am convinced you would not, by your thoughtlessness and frivolity, oblige the friendly Blumenbach so often to complain. As your particular tutor, and your father's friend, the good old man had much pride in you ; and his anger at your present levity is great in proportion as this pride was gratified by your former diligence. Do, my brother, I entreat you, break through the delusions which enthral you ; delusions leading you from all that is just and honourable, to guilt and inevitable misery. Never let it be said an Altenfeldt could be a profligate—a gambler ! That I love you with an affection passing that of brothers in general, you know full well ; and you also know that

were we deprived, this moment, of our excellent father, I would willingly share with you my last crust—but alas! Conrad, I am not a free agent. In a few months my marriage with the Countess Annalie takes place, and whatever wealth may then, or hereafter, be mine, is but held in trust for those who may come after me. I speak thus because I know to what an extent you have been imprudent. Oh! Conrad, were you but aware of the inconveniences you have occasioned our parents, aged as they are, and ill able to deprive themselves of habitual luxuries, I think you would pause before you squandered in a debauch, or staked at a gaming-table, a sum which, if lost, leaves you without other means of payment than the despoiling those whom both love and duty should teach you to succour. At dawn of day I must quit Heidelberg—I have come many miles out of my direct route to have this conversation with you; let it not, I beseech you, be that I have spoken in vain. Pause and reflect, ere too late, and be to us again that son, that brother, on whom we poured our love and blessings.”

Conrad remained silent, his face buried in his hands, which were placed on the table before which he sat; his countenance was consequently entirely concealed; but, by the convulsive heaving of his shoulders, and the quickly-drawn breath, Hubert concluded that his brother was deeply moved. He approached, and bending over him, whilst he removed from his burning forehead the clustering hair, said affectionately, “I perceive, Conrad, that you weep:—hide not those tears from me, my brother, for I regard them as the promise of a reformation which will bring happiness to us all; and believe me, I would rather witness those tears, and hear those deep-drawn sighs, than see you the merriest speaker, or loudest laugh, in one of those orgies which have, of late, so strangely fascinated you.”

Conrad took the hand of his brother and pressed it to his throbbing temples—to speak was impossible—tears choked his utterance—he arose from his chair, and falling on the neck of the pitying Hubert, there wept in bitter repentance. At length, after a severe struggle, he said, “Hubert, I trust you will find me worthy of this interest; for I will strive to be all that you could wish me: but I have a weak and wavering spirit, and can never hope to emulate your worth. Yet bear with me, I implore you, Hubert! cast me not off, and the knowledge of possessing your friendship—your esteem—may stimulate me to deserve it. Heaven bless you, my brother!”

In the morning they parted. Conrad, more calm than on the preceding evening, reassured the anxious Hubert that his admonitions should not be unheeded. Taking his brother's hand, he said, “Your nuptials are soon to be celebrated; I will be with you then, Hubert, and you shall find me indeed an altered

man. Now, farewell ! claim for me the blessing of my much loved parents, and think of me with kindness."

Hubert returned with all a brother's love the warm pressure of Conrad's trembling hand—his heart was too full to allow of his speaking—they embraced in silence, and Hubert was soon far on his way to his paternal home, whilst Conrad returned to his lonely study sad, and out of humour with himself, and with all around him. His life had latterly been one of much excitement : joyous in the extreme whilst *it* lasted, but ever, in the intervals of pleasure, visited by pain and remorse. Still it had been *excitement*, which is as absolutely necessary to a young and vigorous mind, as exercise is to the body. Happy that youth who, from choice or principle, lets nought constitute the exercise of his mind or feelings but what virtue may permit, or his conscience approve. Conrad now felt that days, nay weeks, and months, must be dragged through within the walls of that gloomy college ; that he must devote himself to abstruse study, and to dry and uninteresting reading ; that he must confine himself to the society of Blumenbach, avoiding all intercourse with that joy-inspiring band he once falsely called his friends—must withstand all their temptations, and, with courage, repel their lures. And Wallenstein and Suzeline ? Ay, there was the oasis in this desert : he would devote himself to virtue for the sake of Suzeline.

For many months he persevered in the course of life his good sense had dictated to him to pursue. The mornings were dedicated to arduous study, the evenings to innocent recreation in the society of Suzeline and her virtuous family. The time too now approached for the marriage of his brother, and Conrad could look forward to a meeting with his relatives with unmixed pleasure. He had weaned himself, he thought, entirely from pursuits unworthy of his birth and talents, and was once more regarded by all, but his late libertine companions, as a young man of high worth and promise.

He had been deeply occupied the whole of one sultry morn in the month of August, in the translation of an abstruse and difficult Latin work. His whole mind had been employed in the task, and he was unmindful of all around him, until the intense warmth of his chamber recalled him from his abstraction. The burning evening sun streamed in at the unopened casement, and fell full on the desk of the now exhausted student. Everything bespoke the languor attendant on the closing of a summer day ; even the usually active spaniel, who was wont to play around him the moment her sagacity informed her he was unoccupied, now slumbered extended at his feet, lulled, it should seem, by the hum of numerous insects, who alone appeared busy in that oppressive atmosphere, and were droning

their little songs in the broad sunbeam. Finding the closeness of his room unbearable, Conrad rose to open the window : the chapel bell struck the half-hour past six, and as he leaned forward to look into the court beneath, he saw several of the students issuing from the different portals, loitering in groups, arranging their plans for the evening. — “Ah !” he almost sighed, “there is young Richter challenging Bohler and Hartz to join him in a sail up that lovely river, to visit, without doubt, the cottage of Jan Spiller. Well, I am no admirer of his gaudy laughter-loving daughters or of his sour wine ; and yet when I think of that cool water, with its green and refreshing banks, I could almost be tempted to join their party—but they move on—they are gone—and without even a passing glance at my window : but who have we here ? Alfred Müller, his brother, the Count Hiernstern, and linked on to a stranger, that very genius of mirth—Hans Stolberg. When did that dare-devil return to Heidelberg ?—and see, they approach this way. Heavens ! what a shout of laughter. But I must withdraw, for if seen, Hans will not even let the strong lock of my chamber be a security against his intrusion.” — So saying, he left the window and threw himself pettishly into the chair he had just quitted. Soon his name, called in the joy-inspiring voice of Stolberg, impelled him almost involuntarily to the window,—but he did resist the call, and firmly remained in his place : again was he called, and challenged to come forth by that most musical voice.

“Conrad, bookworm, runagate, answer man, or I will storm your citadel, and show no quarter. What ! no answer ? Then let us try what music can do ;” and, in rich mellow tones, the party began a well-known bacchanalian chorus. Conrad listened, and his power of resistance wavered, but the last tones of their song now sounded faintly in distance, and his fortitude was spared further trial.

Long did he remain in sad rumination, gazing on the distant mountains : the setting sun now prepared to dip behind their summits, and the mysterious whisper in the garden of Heidelberg recurred to the memory of Conrad : that whisper so long forgotten, so unfortunately remembered.

“Could it have been fancy ?—was I dreaming ?—It proffered fairly, I must allow, be it what it might ; and, when I look at these ponderous tomes, and know how much of their essence I must infuse into my already-tired brain, I could almost wish it were indeed reality, and that I had in truth a spirit so accommodating at my call.”

“Command me,” sounded most musically in his ear. Conrad started—looked around his antique chamber, and, like a second Don Cleofas, almost expected to see the *diable* himself walk out

of the ink-bottle. But no—all was still, and he was assured that he must be alone.

"This will never do!" he at length exclaimed. "I must banish these fancies, or I shall become as mystified as any German student past, present, or to come, who has lived on ghosts, witches, spirits, and hobgoblins. Come Latin, come Greek!—bring me to common sense and plain matter of fact. And here is honest Frantz to dispel, by his presence, the mist of these illusions."

As he spoke, his servant entered, bringing a note which, by the superscription, he saw at a glance came from Stolberg. He laid it on his desk unopened, whilst a cold shudder ran through his frame. Again the voice sounded in his ear, tempting him to read. He broke the seal, and read as follows:

"Conrad, why have you forsaken us? Have wine, love, and beauty lost *all* charm for you? We are now at the paradise of Eleonora—come to us, and all will be forgotten.

"Yours,
"STOLBERG."

Under this was written in pencil, in a beautifully delicate character—"All will be *forgiven*—your Eleonora."

"Stolberg is at the house of Eleonora—*your* Eleonora," again whispered the spirit in his ear. "Will you not now make essay of my power?"

"I am thine, demon, or whatever thou art," answered the infatuated youth; and, rushing from the college, was soon in the splendid saloon of the beautiful but erring Eleonora.

When he entered, Stolberg was leaning over the couch on which he was seated, and he fancied he saw a glance of much meaning exchanged by them, as he approached; but Stolberg received him with an air so open and unembarrassed, and Eleonora so undisguisedly expressed her happiness at again seeing the long-estranged Conrad, that, seated by her side, all was soon forgotten, save the brilliant creature with whom he conversed. The night was spent in every species of refined dissipation. Eleonora avowed her esteem—her love—the gaming-table spread its lures—and wines, rich and exquisite, tempted the most fastidious to drink, even to excess.

Conrad remained unscathed. Many times that night was his purse emptied of its contents; yet, at a wish, behold! it was replenished. Goblet after goblet was drained, still Conrad retained his senses cool and unimpaired. Satiety was dispelled—fatigue unfelt:—his dissolute companions regarded him with wonder, and to himself he was incomprehensible. Morning, pure, calm morning, at length dawned; and, as Conrad entered

his own quiet room, the superhuman excitement which had held him the whole of the night began to subside ; the fresh breeze from the open casement blew on his flushed cheek : the sun too, he observed from the reflection on the opposite mountains, was rising. The power of the demon was for the time gone, and Conrad could reflect.

"Would that I could recall this dreadful night !" was his first thought.

"That is not possible," sounded in his sickening ear. "But the sun is up—it is for you to command."

Conrad, when he had changed his dress and washed the wine-stains from his face, felt perfectly refreshed, and in every way competent to the morning duties. His head was more than commonly clear ; and, in a metaphysical argument, he evinced so much perspicuity, that he was complimented by the professor of logic on his composition, both for the skill he had shown in conducting his argument, and for the elegance and purity of the style and language ; and Professor Küper was not in the habit of making further comment than a cold approval. Conrad was astonished himself at the power of disputation he had shown, and at the ease with which he had accomplished a most difficult task, and that too within a few hours of quitting a scene of most unbridled debauchery. He returned from the schools to his study, animated by the praises that had been poured upon him.

"Have you further commands ?" was demanded in that mystical silver tone.

"Commands, did you say, most delightful spirit?—Yes, a thousand," exclaimed the excited student. "Only let me have such mornings and days of triumph as this has proved, and you may rule me ever, even for such nights of misrule as the last : for I see not but I am the better for it."

"The *better* for it !" echoed the good genius of Conrad—that is to say, his conscience, as though in mockery repeating ; and, for a moment, conscience did prevail—alas ! but for a moment—for, with this demon at his call, everything appeared in his power—fame, wealth, Suzeline, and Eleonora.

Brilliant and mysterious was now the existence of the student. Winning and deserving high academic honours, his rooms were crowded by day with men of science and learning—until the sun dipping behind the western mountains, the sway of his directing demon began, and then each succeeding hour was marked by revelry—mad, fiend-like revelry : folly led to folly, and crime to crime, until the star of day compelled this "busy devil," by his compact, again to servility. Oh, how hateful this bondage soon became to Conrad !—but he had thoughtlessly embarked in it, and was now become too deeply engaged not to be forced to abide the consequences, be they what they might.

Disturbances now grew frequent in the streets of Heidelberg ; dreadful tales were told of the misconduct of the students ; and, to the surprise of the professors of the college, the hero of every nocturnal riot was Conrad Von Altenfeldt. The young and beautiful wife of a respectable citizen was torn from her home ; chance directed the distracted husband to the place of her concealment—a lone house in the suburbs of the city, inhabited by wretches whose profession was but too unequivocal. She was alone, it is true, when her husband entered the ruinous and squalid chamber ; but she persisted in affirming that it was the young Count Altenfeldt who had lured her away—with what intent she shuddered but to think of.

The only son of the pastor of a neighbouring village, placed at the college in order to enable him to take up the profession of his aged father, whose infirmities were fast growing on him, had been enticed to the house of Eleonora de Wontner, and there, intoxicated by the blandishments of beauty, the power of wine, and every other fascination of this Circean abode, wrecked all that had hitherto made life happy ! his self-esteem was lost, entirely lost, in one short night—and the tempter who had urged him on was Altenfeldt.

The lovely daughter of the college gardener had been seen, at midnight, rushing from the turret staircase which led to the apartments of Conrad, her dress in disorder, her hair dishevelled, and shrieking in a voice of agony, “ Mercy, mercy ! save me from Von Altenfeldt.” Ida was clasped to the bosom of her affrighted parent—but not in innocence.

The only son of a widow had been ruined at a gaming-table—ruined past hope. To live a beggar—and, above all, to see a sick and sorrow-worn mother pining in penury—was more than human courage could endure.—Wilhelm Dortmann was found a disfigured corpse in the cemetery of the college. A note, addressed to Conrad, was found on the table of the unhappy man ; it contained few words ; but when delivered to Conrad, at mid-day, those few words were as a dagger in his heart.

“ You have destroyed the son—pity and protect the mother.
—W D.”

And did Altenfeldt bear this worse than slavery, without a struggle to free himself from the sway of a master become too mighty for him?—No—often when day has dawned, and the bright and joyous sun has dispelled, with the darkness of night, the power of the fiend, the enormities committed in the form of Conrad, but by the agency of the demon who enthralled him, have staggered him with the weight and amount of the sins he felt he was thus so heedlessly incurring ; and he has vowed to free himself from that power which was hurrying him to sure destruction both here and hereafter. But then the labyrinth of

learning in which he had embarked, and the giddy height he had attained, solely by the spirit which ruled him, rose to his contemplation, and pride, that worldly despot, held him still enslaved to his destroyer.

And Suzeline?—was she entirely forgotten in this intoxicating alternation of the daily acquisition of fame and honour, and the nightly revel and debauch? No; not forgotten, but wilfully shunned, as a being of too pure a mould to be contaminated by the presence of such a wretch as Conrad could not but feel he had become. Her birthday approached, and an affectionate billet from his betrothed prayed for his presence; to refuse was impossible, and yet the hour of meeting was fixed for that of *sunset*—for that hour, when, losing all control over himself, Conrad was doomed to be the passive agent of a demon. He determined to see her, to plead indisposition, and excuse himself from attending on the night of her fête. She received him with all the affection she felt, and laughing at his plea, said, “You bookworm, it is the air of that gloomy college which has stolen the ruddy hue from your cheek. I will listen to no excuse; the fresh breeze of the river will refresh you, dear Conrad, and you shall guide my boat to the pavilion which my brother has raised for me on its bank, and which is to be our ball-room. To-morrow at sunset, I shall look for you.”

“At sunset, Suzeline?” half muttered the student. “Never—I would sooner tear this bursting heart from my tortured breast, than be with you after sunset.”

Tears rushed to the eyes of Suzeline, and, mournfully shaking her head, she said, “I fear it is too true, that I am but second in the heart of Conrad, a heart in which I would reign alone. Can you not spare me one short evening? Are hours passed away from her who, rumour has told me, has supplanted me in your affections, so irksome that not one can be endured from her side?—fie on it. I could have thought all were false in this world; father—brother—sister—friend—even my mother—all, save Conrad. Now is the hated truth forced on my conviction, and in to-morrow’s fête, desolate, wretched, and alone, I shall be pointed at by all as the forsaken one of Count Altenfeldt.”

“Suzeline,” gasped the agitated Conrad, “I am on the very brink of madness, and yet you urge me forward. I *will* be at your fête.”

“Conrad,” said Louis, who then joined them, “I think, by Jove, you are indeed mad!—what is all this? My sweet Suzeline looks heart-stricken, and you the counterpart of Faust, when in the clutches of the fell Mephistophiles.”

A loud unearthly laugh was the only reply of Conrad, who, turning to Suzeline, said, “At sunset expect me,” and left the castle.

That night was passed as many a preceding one had been. Eleonora was the Armida of the hour—all was bacchanalian riot and excess, and Stolberg the presiding god. Again morning dawned, and with the sun came remorse and shame to Conrad—the morning, too, of the fête of her whom, when he was not under the influence of the fiend, he loved so fondly, so purely. Again he decided not to join the evening festival; and as the time approached that was appointed for quitting the city, he hastened to the apartment of his friend, but there learnt that Louis had quitted Heidelberg some time, on a summons from his father.

This absence was a sensible relief; and, immediately returning to his chamber, Conrad threw himself into a chair, fully determined nothing should induce him to quit it until the bright sun, which was now dipping behind the western hills, should return to the eastern hemisphere, bearing life and joy, and when the dominion of the demon would cease, who had given such direful proof of his power and evil propensities. Lost in thought, the student pondered on the means of ridding himself of a thrall which had become so intolerable, but in vain, all was hopeless.

The last golden ray faded from the so lately burnished sky, and slowly the young and silver moon assumed her modest reign; all was hushed in the now deserted courts of the college, and the soft evening air entering the opened casement, fanned gently with its freshness the fever-flushed cheek of Conrad. Presently his head drooped on his chest—he dozed: anon he roused himself, but an unusual heaviness overpowered him, and anon he slept—soundly slept, until suddenly awakened by the sound of gay music, and the blaze of numerous lights. Gazing around, he perceived that, in rich and gay attire, he was seated on a mossy couch by the side of Suzeline, in a pavilion which appeared a wilderness of flowers; gay dancers hovered around them, and Suzeline, bright in simple beauty, seemed the very soul of love.

Dazzled by the uncommon brilliancy of the scene, all appeared to the bewildered Conrad as enchantment, and he might have deemed the whole to be an illusive dream but for a fiendish laugh which rang in his ears, and a voice, not to be mistaken, which whispered, “Fool—idiot—did you think to rob me of to-night? a night, too, which gives to me the long coveted Suzeline!”

Altenfeldt started on his feet, and essayed to quit the scene of festivity, which now seemed to him a charnel-house filled with mouldering spectres—he would have said, “Fly, Suzeline!” but his voice was lost in a murmuring sigh, and he felt but too truly that he might *wish* to avoid and avert the horrors about to be accomplished—but that to *act* was no longer in his power. In-

stead of warnings, he poured into the chaste ear of the yet innocent maiden vows of the most impassioned love ; instead of leading Suzeline to the side and protection of her mother, she was in his arms, and they were lost in the mazes of the waltz ; and, giddy with the intoxicating dance, soon forgot earth—heaven—all, save love.

Midnight sounded—the guests were departing, and Conrad and his Suzeline were sought for in the windings of the brilliantly illuminated walks that surrounded the pavilion—long and vain was the search—vain the repeated name of Suzeline and of Altenfeldt—all was dismay and confusion. The wreath which had adorned the hair of the ill-fated girl was found faded and trampled on—the veil of silver gauze which had shaded her lovely figure, was discovered torn and soiled on the bank of the river, which slept in peace, save when, gently rippled by the light night-breeze, it danced in the glittering moonbeam—all unconscious that its now unruffled bosom had so lately proved the grave of betrayed and self-immolated innocence. Silence soon reigned in the late joyous scene—desolation seemed to make the spot her own from that terrific hour—and even now, as they pass that ruined bower, fearful mothers press close to their bosoms their trembling daughters and sigh for Suzeline of Wallenstein !

An hour after midnight, the Count Altenfeldt was seen striding through the streets of Heidelberg, with a flushed countenance and disordered dress. None dared to impede the rapidity of his progress, and, unstayed, he reached the house of Eleonora de Wontner. An immense crowd was tumultuously assembled round the gates, but all made way for the impetuous Conrad, though they muttered as he passed—“ Ay, go and see what you have brought about. Jealousy and murder go hand in hand.” Still he strode on until he reached the saloon of Eleonora—that room, the scene of all his guilty pleasures. There, on a couch by which stood one solitary menial, was extended the lifeless form of the still beauteous Eleonora. The flowers which had ornamented her bosom, scarce faded, were clotted with the blood which flowed from the wound in her temple, in one single stream, finding its way down her marble neck, and staining in one or two places the white satin robe in which she was attired. Her features were composed, and, but for those crimson stains, it might have been thought she slept ; so calm, so placid looked in death that guilty one. It was a soul-harrowing sight, even for the fiend-bound ; and turning from it with horror, he beheld, through the opposite door, Hans Stolberg stretched on a bed, insensible if not dead. He was attended by a surgeon, who appeared to be dressing a wound. Conrad approached the bed, when Stolberg, in the extreme of

agony, uttered a fearful groan, and, unclosing his glazed eyes, glared in horror on Altenfeldt.

After a dreadful pause, he uttered, in a voice barely articulate, "Ah, wretch! and are you come at last, to see and to enjoy your work? Who triumphs now, Altenfeldt or Stolberg? I have removed her from your intermeddling love, and would have lived to have sent you also to your reckoning, but for these officious fools," and, as he spoke he drove from him, with a sudden effort, the trembling and panic-struck surgeon; and, springing from the bed, clutched Conrad by the throat, and would have strangled him in that superhuman grasp, had not the agonies of death at that instant seized him. His convulsive hands relaxed their hold, and the same moment saw him a corpse on the floor.

In the confusion which ensued, Conrad rushed from that fatal house, and through unfrequented streets, reached the college. The gates were closed for the night, and he was turning from them when he fancied he saw a figure in white move within the portal, and thought he heard a sob of distress. He approached, when again the fiendish laugh burst forth:

"Woman, you escaped me once, but now you are mine, in spite of fate."

It was the once honoured and adored wife of the worthy citizen—now an outcast, driven by a jealous, heart-broken husband, with blows and curses, from his door—an outcast, lone and unsheltered. Where she wandered that fatal night none could tell; but, at daybreak, she was found in an obscure alley, dying, and in a state which baffles all description, and her last sigh was a curse on Altenfeldt. And Conrad?—The whole of that turbulent night he wandered through the city, joining in every scene of profligacy and riot he chanced to fall in with. At length morning dawned; a bright and heavenly sun arose, and the power of the now sated fiend over the unfortunate student was at an end,—and for ever!

For hours had Conrad been sought by the alarmed and faithful Frantz. The whole of Heidelberg was in an uproar, demanding justice, and vowing vengeance on the head of Altenfeldt. At length, at midday, he was discovered, a raving maniac, in the faded pavilion of poor Suzeline. No time was lost in conveying him to the house of his father. Broken in constitution, and a confirmed lunatic, Conrad roamed about the scenes of his youth, unconscious of all, yet incessantly heaping curses on the fiend, who, in the "eternal now" of madness, he fancied still held sway over him.

Years rolled on: his afflicted parents slept in the tomb of their ancestors—the lovely infant of Hubert, the virtuous Hubert, and his estimable Annalie, had reached manhood—but still no

change was perceptible in the afflicting malady of the now no longer youthful Conrad. Deep was the sorrow of his attached brother, and his ever-faithful Frantz ; but, at length, it was announced by the medical attendant that he thought reason was slowly but surely regaining her power over the mind of Altenfeldt ; and, in the course of another year, he was pronounced as convalescent. Heaven in mercy had vouchsafed to withdraw its severe visitation. Recommended by his physician to travel, and to avoid all scenes fraught with saddening reminiscences, which, as memory resumed its power, might endanger a return of his malady, Conrad again left his home, Germany, and all that was dear to him, and wandered a second Cain, through the world, followed only by Frantz. Many were the climes he visited, but never again did he enter his native land !





SABINE HALL;

OR, RECOLLECTIONS OF YOUTH.



IMBIBED oxygen for the first time under circumstances somewhat more favourable than nine-tenths of mankind usually do, inasmuch as I was born, not with a silver spoon in my mouth, nor possessed of two thousand acres of fruitful land, but with half only of those useful appendages, being a twin. I and my brother had no sooner become terrestrial beings, than my father (as antiquated a mortal as ever had sons, and better versed in the Roman history than the sacred), determined on naming us after those two famous heroes and demi-gods, to whom tradition ascribes the foundation of that wonderful empire which subjected to its dominion the nations of the earth, both civilised and barbarous, and instructed man in all the arts and sciences for upwards of a thousand years. Accordingly, on the first dawn of our existence, the curate (*pedagogus parochialis*) of my father's parish was summoned to the family mansion (lest Dame Nature should play any freaks with her new-born creatures), to confer on us the patronymics of Romulus and Remus.

The good man, whose predilections of course were for *Christian*-names, betrayed in his countenance a misapprehension of my father's instructions. No doubt it occurred to him, that our mother had never taken the vestal vow—that our father was as unlike Mars, as she was Venus—that we had never floated on the Tiber in a basket, nor been rescued from its torrent by a civilised wolf; and that it was more probable we should build a dog-kennel on one of our patrimonial acres in Shropshire, than found a second Rome. Be this as it may, the worthy pastor did as he was bidden, and proceeded to commit what he deemed an offence against the scriptural nomenclature; the baptismal office or rite was performed, and his clerical scruples overcome with libations of my father's best port, plentifully

quaffed, from votive cups, to the rising fame of the new-made Christians—certainly a wiser course than to have his name inscribed in his patron's black book, for nonconformity to his wishes. Thus classically named, classically did we shoot up through our infancy and boyhood. Like our ancient prototypes, we seemed to betray, or rather indicate, a precocity both of animal and mental endowment—on contemplating which, our parent appeared to acquire an additional altitude to his figure (already measuring nearly seven feet, and as slender and erect as a Norway pine), and his mind was strongly impressed with visions of the glorious destiny awaiting his offspring. Poor man! while dreaming perpetually on the past yet splendid era of Roman glory, or on the golden future his sons were to attain, the present quite escaped his calculations; our Herculean energies and propensities never entered his pericranium, although scarcely a day passed in which, either an arrow discharged from a crossbow, a stone hurled from a sling, or a misdirected shot from a fowling-piece, did not kill a splendid peacock or pheasant, lame one of his favourite spaniels, nay, sometimes a liveried biped, or demolish a light or two of the green-house, stored with exotics; nor were these feats regarded as indications of future celebrity or prowess. So long as the storied panes, with their delineations of ancestral honours, escaped destruction, or the rusty rolls of papyrus were not converted into paper kites, the Castalian waters of my father's life flowed smoothly on; and it was not until he had discovered an antique bust of Julius Cæsar (the great gem of his collection) tattooed in the most ingenious and grotesque manner imaginable with a penknife and Japan blacking, that he was aroused from his slumbers to avenge the insult offered the mighty Cæsar, and to suffer his parental affection to be superseded by that for the antique.

Of my mother I have as yet said nothing. All, indeed, that need be said relating to her, is *short*, and not sentimental. Fortunately for the equilibrium of the universe, Nature or some other power has instituted a law, that extremes should every now and then meet. This common and necessary provision imposed on all mankind, our parents most willingly complied with (as is before indicated); and, let me add, but for the bustling, dusting and modernising spirit which pervaded the maternal side of Sabine Hall, the paternal, with its Roman lord, its tattooed Cæsar, noseless Pliny, papyrian rolls, illuminated missals, and all its "*fragmenta vetusta*," would have resolved or returned into its primeval chaos, quite as awful and unanalysable as that which the Roman poet Virgil has so well succeeded in depicting.

Sacred and secluded as was my father's studio, and which

(except by stealth) the heavy foot of man never disturbed, the lighter foot of woman very often did ; not in search of classic lore, but of dust ; for my mother (when her gaunt lord's absence permitted it) wended her way to the sacred apartment, and there, armed neither with gauntlet nor falchion but with leathern gloves and feather brush, fiercely encountered Sallust, Livy, Cicero, Pliny, and the whole host of the learned and antiquarian world, classical, historical, and dubious ; and, if the dust she "kicked up" (*vulgo dicens*) did not equal that in the plains of Marathon on a celebrated occasion, it was equally annoying to those within its atmospheric circumference. In truth, with such Amazonian spirit did she bestir herself on these sacrilegious visits that the field of her exertions presented a sad spectacle of her destructive fury, in fragments of tessellated pavements, antique marbles, dislocated and mutilated bronzes, rusty weapons, and all those precious articles designated by the word *virtù*. So zealous and active were her unhallowed detergent attentions, that she really and literally deserved to have inscribed on her family escutcheon, the motto of the hero of antiquity—"Veni, vidi, vici."

Another word or two on my mother's domestic, maternal, and social qualifications. We have already seen that order and cleanliness were leading features in the domestic arrangements at Sabine Hall ; to which may be added, all that is comprised in the words comfort and respectability, that is to say—within doors, all that hospitality can bestow, and without, all that respectability can command ; her own example furnished to the menials or dependants at the Hall, a pattern of industry, frugality and cleanliness, in which all the branches of domestic and rural economy were fully developed, and which produced, as a natural result, order, peace, and quiet, with their usual concomitant plenty,—the overflowings or superabundance of which was liberally distributed in unostentatious charity amongst the neighbouring poor. Of her mental acquirements, I can say less : suffice it, that her education had been conducted in the best school of the county, with a special regard to the distinction between the useful and ornamental—since it partook largely of the former. The embellishments, as they are termed, of the sex, were not known in the establishment ; whilst usefulness, industry, good manners, and morality, combined with the duties of religion, formed at that time of day the basis of female education. What are now considered female accomplishments, were then totally unknown. These exotics, like many of the floral world, may please the eye or gratify the senses, yet it is more than doubtful if we can correctly judge, from observation, whether the present system has not the same relative analogy to the past, that dross has to the pure ore in the metallic world.

Out of doors, the good lady's visits were usually confined to her poor and sick neighbours; she not only distributed food and wine to such as required them, but now and then pecuniary relief under the advice of her almoner, the vicar—and often supplanted the village apothecary in his function, by administering with her own hand a draught, pill, bolus, or strengthening cordial prepared from the dicta of the famed Culpepper, or from the recipes carefully preserved in "My Grandmother's Book of Family Nostrums," which said family nostrums were always to be found on the same shelf, and in juxtaposition, with the "Book of Family Prayers;" so that whether it happened that the body or mind of the patient was diseased, a medicine for either was at hand.

It need scarcely be observed, that she was most punctual in her attendance at the house of God, always preferring to walk thither, and shrewdly observing, there was no humility in going to church in a coach, and that if the great expected their neighbours to be good, they must themselves set the example; in addition, quoting and fortifying her observation with some axiom of Roger Ascham, the schoolmaster, to his royal pupil (afterwards Queen Elizabeth), to that effect. On a very wet day, a dispensation usually passed under the family seal at Sabine Hall, enabling the good lady to go in her carriage to be shriven, rather than omit her sabbatical duty—on all which occasions the villagers exhibited the most visible concern for her health, which they felt convinced must be more than equivocal by the appearance of the carriage—indeed the good lady herself looked almost ashamed of being seen in such a situation.

The two coal-black stall-fed coach horses (like His Majesty's Hanoverian state stud), occasionally appeared in their best housings and trappings, drawing what was then called a *coach*, but now a *carriage*, of ample dimensions, well stuffed, wadded, and bolstered, with all other sorts of conveniences for the easy transportation of some half-dozen of His Majesty's liege subjects, from one domain to another. In it sat my august father, going either to the neighbouring town, to the election of knights for the shire, or to meet His Majesty's justices of assize, or perhaps to a county meeting. As to the county race ball, my mother, having no daughters to introduce, nor any desire to come in contact with the modern *accomplishments* there exhibited, always declined these meetings; and though assailed with incessant and unwearied requests to accompany her lord in his quaternal visitations to the great metropolis (having no very strong presentiment of its courtesies, accommodations or advantages, nor any wish to amalgamate her "household stuff," economical habits and notions, with modern improvements,) she was satisfied to remain on the safe side of the Rubicon.

My father generally returned pretty early from his daily ride on the Campus Martius, as he was pleased to term a verdant plot of about fifty acres adjoining the mansion, when he proceeded to his *sanctum*, where his antiquarian and classical companions had, in a great measure, recovered their "status quo ante bellum" (without making any discovery of the sad havoc which had occurred in his temporary absence) to feast himself as usual, on the contemplation of his favourite study—the manners, customs, and habits of the ancient Romans—in the consideration of which, their taste for delicate viands and choice wines not unfrequently, and very seriously, occupied his attention till dinner time; he wishing to assimilate his farinaceous, carnivorous, and vinous propensities to the various aliments by which the afore-named ancient personages sustained their corpuses in health and strength, whereby they were no doubt better enabled to maintain the superiority over their Scythian, Numidian, and Gothic compeers in the annals of fame. My father's wines were the true Falernian, his fish (the produce of the circumambient stream surrounding the demesne) were lampreys at least (*Anglice* eels); and for the solid aliments of beef and mutton, as they were not to be found in the bill of fare of Roman luxuries, he ventured to consider them of higher origin, perhaps antediluvian or a masonic diet, on which Kings Solomon and Hiram fed in secret, when contriving that stupendous erection, that wonder of the world, the Temple of Jerusalem; whilst the hare, partridge, pheasant, venison, and other game, were acceptable only to his palate, and furnished his table, under their ancient cognomina of *lepus*, *perdrix*, &c.

Thus fed with antiquarian food, both mental and corporeal, my father, with his associates, ranked high in the scale of antiquarian lore; it being an inferential if not logical conclusion, that, if the pugnacious spirit of the game-cock be the effect of appropriate feeding and training, that spirit of research for which the antiquarian has credit with the world, must be equally an effect of similar co-operating causes. Dubbed a member of the far-famed Antiquarian Society, and also of the no less famed Beef-steak Club, whose sittings were held in the metropolis, it became both my father's duty and inclination to make quaternary visits thereto, where he laid in fresh stores of intellectual provender, in the shape of black-letter volumes, illegible MSS., and all those varieties of the rare and unique displayed by dealers in curiosities and articles of *worth*, to tempt the inquisitive country gentleman in his devious course about town; for devious it must have been when I acquaint you that neither the localities of the "Porridge Island" nor the insalubrious declivities of "Saffron Hill," the pestilential vapours of "the Borough Clink," nor the purlicious and nuisances of the "ancient City of Westminster,"

escaped the persevering diligence and all-searching eye of this omnivorous antiquary.

To illustrate, by way of anecdote, the pretensions of my father to be ranked amongst the members of that innocuous and amusing, if not *learned society*, the following may be mentioned. It happened that this sage of antiquity had dropped in to dine with the Beef-steak Club, where having partaken somewhat freely of the Tuscan, and received divers quizzing encomiums or compliments on his prevailing taste, it occurred to another member that it might be as well to tempt his learned brother to a free discussion "on the origin of the said club." Since the Calf's-head Club and the Hell-fire Club, *cum multis aliis*, had been honoured with a publication of their annals, why was not the Beef-steak Club also to be signalised? Now my father (though by no means a pugnacious) was certainly an excitable animal, and only required *quantum suff.* of the Falernian, or Tuscan, to rouse a certain disease lurking in his veins, called the *cacoethes loquendi*, in contradistinction to the *cacoethes scribendi*, though both often arising from the same above-mentioned exhilarating cause. This friend, at the same time, rubbed him down with a due portion of the unction of flattery, by assuring him that it was a debt of honour due from him to the club; superadding also that his name would be enrolled in their annals and handed down to posterity *in secula seculorum*.

An appeal like this was not to be withstood; my father's tide was at the flood; and to use his own expression, he felt, at that moment, eloquent even to the finger-ends, as he set forth in pompous and classic terms the glories of a club which, in the annals of English epicurism, as far exceeds all others in celebrity as it does in substance and savour, and to which is strictly applicable the axiom "*de gustibus non est disputandum*;" since princes, nobles, ecclesiastics, nay all ranks and grades of society, have been anxious to enrol themselves as members thereof.

And now came the tug of war:—its origin. The members sat in silent wonder. All was hushed: there was not a single murmur, to disturb the stream of the speaker's eloquence, as he arrived at the last link of the mighty and learned chain. The memorable and honourable club of which he then spoke had doubtless originated with the *Romans* and their Emperor Maximin, who seldom passed a day without consuming the extraordinary quantity of thirty pounds of solid meat; and that this meat was beef, he, my father, had had the inexpressible satisfaction of ascertaining from an old manuscript of that emperor's reign, which he had been fortunate enough to meet with only that very morning.

Having decided this weighty point, my sire, it might have been expected, would have sat down satisfied with his triumph:

but no ; he had still another important fact to state, which was neither more nor less than that, from the present Beef-steak Club originated the corps of his majesty's "*Beef-eaters!*" Now, alas ! like others of his fraternity, my father was not infallible in antiquarian lore ; for "*The Buffetiers*" had their origin and office from being the persons employed to serve or place the dainties about to be masticated by his majesty's royal progenitors in the buffets or closets within the royal apartments. It seems, however, there was so much mystification in this attempt to give an account of the club and its offspring ("*the Beef-eaters*"), that, after receiving the thanks of the assembled members for his luminous disquisition, the whole ended in a proposition on my father's part to submit his reading and research on those subjects to the next meeting of the Antiquarian Society. This appeared to give general satisfaction, and the club resumed its libations *con amore*.

My brother Remus and I had now arrived at an age at which most young men of family make choice of what is termed a profession ; and as birthright with us had no precedence, owing to the remarkable negligence of my mother's female accoucheur in omitting to distinguish which of the twain first appeared in this terrestrial hemisphere (which is generally done by affixing some ornamental filament or bandage round the arm of the first born), nor had the event been determined by the same augury which decided that of our namesakes—viz., a flight of birds ; the heirs and successors to my father's estates had been duly and justly provided for by his will : we were made joint inheritors and proprietors of Sabine Hall. Untimely fate, however, shortly set aside this paternal arrangement by the death of my brother Remus, which he met with whilst hunting. His horse, the best, the Phlegethon of my father's stud, refused a leap—when my brother, forgetting the "*O ! puer, parce stimulos,*" rushed upon his end through not attending to the instinctive remonstrance or admonition of the sagacious animal which he bestrode.

The loss of poor Remus was, of course, much lamented by the Nimrods of the day ; and Sabine Hall thus became the house of mourning, in which I truly sympathised. A determination, however, that my father had come to, upon the demise of my brother, added to my sorrow and produced much embarrassment. It was, to send me off to a public school to be *educated*, for although a tutor, a Cambridge scholar, and distinguished as a wrangler, had long been an inmate of Sabine Hall, my wits had not been much sharpened by his instruction, and, in fact, Priscian's head was but too often broken. The classics were not my favourite study ; nor did they occupy a moment's serious consideration ; whilst the making of nets, to take both fish and game—catching flies for the trout-stream—breaking in setters, pointers and spaniels

—added to the manly sports or exercises of cricket, quoiting (the ancient discus), wrestling, and fencing, had irresistible charms for me. If I ever had recourse to study, the lucubrations of honest “Izaak Walton,” the “Country Gentleman’s Companion, or Complete Manual for Sportsmen,” and the “Cornish Wrestler or In-play,” were the objects of it ; and these were, at times, laid aside or exchanged for the more animating and interesting recreations of bear-baiting, bull-fighting, hunting the otter, badger, and martin-cat, and the general destruction of all the animal and reptile creation passing under the name of vermin ; nay, even the very fowls of the air—the crane, vulture, hawk, heron, and every species of the feathered tribe that dared to feed on things below—became respectively the objects of my unceasing persecution.

Sir Gilbert ———, a *soi-disant* member of the Beef-steak Club, a landed proprietor, magistrate, and one of the quorum in the county of Salop, a neighbour also of my father’s, had three sons then educating at Harrow ; and, upon his recommendation, I was sent to that far-famed seat of education. The sudden change from home and freedom to the confinement and drudgery of a school, at first ill accorded either with my habits, my feelings, or that haughty air which I already (presuming on my Roman name and ancient family descent) had assumed. Here, however, Greek met Greek ; I soon found that the heir of Sabine Hall must succumb to the usages of Harrow ; and that he who acted the petty tyrant at home must become a slave to the tyrants of a public school : the word discipline had not hitherto been in the vocabulary of Romulus, but the master at Harrow soon convinced me it would shortly be found there ; indeed, before I had been one week within the walls of this modern Rome, it was discovered that I must do as the Romans do ; the haughty untamed spirit of my boyhood soon subsided into a silent acquiescence with the customary abuses of that first-rate classical establishment, and my character resembled more the modern Greek than the ancient Roman. In this, however, I was not singular ; for let me ask, what youth ever entered the precincts of a public school who did not undergo a total revolution of habits and sentiment—and though veering about for a period, did not ultimately settle into the counterpart of some school contemporary, and form his opinions and future course through life on the models there presented ? The connexions and associations taking root at our public schools too often bias and influence the destiny of a youth in future life. His habits and mode of thinking generally take their shape and tincture from objects then and there viewed through a false or imperfect medium ; and experience proves that little else is acquired at celebrated schools but aristocratic and domineering feelings.

The distinctions of nobility, or the accidental advantages of wealth, are greater objects of consideration than the more solid ones of personal merit and mental acquirement.

There was a youth at Harrow (my contemporary), whose spirit and genius partook of the ancient Roman and Greek characters combined ; they were imbued with the haughty military feeling of the former and the poetic lustre of the latter : and which to admire most, his noble bearing and resistance to oppression in all its Protean forms, or his verse with its bewitching imagery and nervous expression, the world has yet to decide. A former age boasted of its Admirable Crichton, we of our no less admirable Byron ; the germs of whose lofty mind were sown at Harrow to be developed in the blood-stained, yet classic fields of the ancient Achaia. When we contemplate the associations we feel in reading the immortal lines of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, how singular a coincidence is it that the best of our modern poets should not only have poured out his song, but his life's blood, in defence of that soil and cause for which so many Grecian heroes and poets of antiquity had done the same.

The late Lord Erskine used to remark that original impressions were not only the strongest but generally the most correct ; Lord Byron presented, however, a flat contradiction to this apothegm. His air, at first, was haughty, his manners repulsive ; but when even schoolboy oppression was the cause—at all hazard, the oppressed was sure of a defender in his lordship, whose courage, ever at hand, generally ensured a victory. Whether in harmless sport or bloody fight, Byron was a decided partisan ; and in whatever cause he enlisted—to use an English phrase, “he was game to the back-bone.” It has been alleged that his lordship's feelings were any thing but kindly. That his heart was warmed by the best sensibilities of human nature, I can, however, attest in the following trifling incident. Some half-dozen of us were bandying our hockey-ball and sticks, when I accidentally received an agonising blow on my shin-bone (perhaps the most sensitive part of the human frame), of which to this day the scar remains indelibly. Never did the soldier of Agincourt, on the anniversary of St. Crispin, or the British warrior on that of Waterloo, feel prouder than do I, in contemplating this scar, bringing with it, as such contemplation does, the recollection of his lordship's kindness. Felled to the ground from the violence of the blow, my senses were for a time suspended, and when consciousness returned, Lord Byron was found at my side, bandaging the limb (the bandage his own neckerchief), and accompanying his action with the warmest expressions of regret at my accident. I need scarcely add that this trifling occurrence has endeared his memory to my heart as much as his matchless verse has to my mind—than

which, that of Shakspeare, Milton, Dryden, nay, even of old Homer himself, in all their majesty, is not more precious.

His lordship was, by-the-way, no doubt uncourteously disposed towards his relative, the late Earl of Carlisle ; for whenever that nobleman made his customary visit at Harrow, Byron always became fidgety, and would rush into any game or sport then going on, obviously to avoid an interview with the noble visitor.

Although my friend Dr. Joseph — was, as all the world admits, one of the first classical scholars of the age (for not a pupil escaped his enquiring and anxious eye) his care was thrown away on me. My best and almost only friend at Harrow was Henry Meadows (now consigned to a watery grave) ; and many were the hours we have trifled away in plotting treason against the state. Much as our illustrious schoolfellow disliked the classics (we have his own word for it),

“ I abhorred
Too much to conquer, for the poet’s sake,
The drilled gull lesson forced down word by word
In my repugnant youth,”

I and my friend hated them much more ; and at the time we did so, were doubtless both ignorant of the great authority we had in support of our aversion.—Milton, as I have since found, grieved bitterly over the time wasted in teaching the dead languages.—Addison considered it an egregious error, that boys, whether they had genius or not, should be compelled to read the poetry of the ancients ; and Cowley, I think, came nearer the truth than either of them, by affirming, that the classics taught words only and not things. And who can subvert these opinions, founded and supported as they are by such high authorities ? Whether Henry Meadows and I did, at length, manage the classics either to our own or the doctor’s satisfaction, must remain questionable ; suffice it, we left Harrow simultaneously, and laden, I should say, exactly with the same quantity of verbose learning. It was kind, perhaps politic, on the part of the doctor (I mean no reflection) to make the best of the matter to my Homer-struck parent. For him to have discovered that not a single spark of the Homeric fire could be elicited from, nor a particle of classic taste be instilled into, his son’s whole composition, would have been more than his philosophy could endure ; the conviction would have buried him deeper than ever in the misty caverns of his antediluvian brain. I, however, returned to Sabine Hall, graced in his opinion (though not in my own) with a classical exterior, and an address which he termed senatorial. Were I to touch on the state of my acquirements

(of which, by-the-bye, I certainly was the best judge) I might be said to have performed a periphrasis of the learned globe without visiting it more closely. At the two physical poles I had certainly touched ; but then, of the people and their language I knew no more than did my sire of the Belles Lettres—of the balls at Almack's—or of the parliamentary debates. Concerning the latter, indeed, my father, like many other wise men, was of opinion, that the less he troubled himself about them the more he consulted his own interests : consequently he nourished opinions far from flattering to the then existing senate-house, and seldom did he launch out in true Ciceronian style, except when, like the bristly badger, he was drawn unwillingly from his burrow.

The only person who could, in true style, effect this, was Sir Gilbert ——. Whenever my father returned from town, his ready friend was generally summoned to dine at Sabine Hall, to discuss the merits and pretensions of the new members of the Beef-steak Club, and in fact to settle to joint satisfaction every point connected with this sarcophagous assembly ; unfortunately, however, for my sire, this furnished not the only topic of conversation. Sir Gilbert ——, knowing every body worth knowing, and, from a speech he had once made, being also known to every body worthy of his acquaintance, it became necessary to discuss, in addition, all topics connected with the *other* assemblies ;—and by the time the second bottle (not of Falernian, for Sir Gilbert drank nothing but Burgundy) was empty, opinions had been broached, first respecting the Lower, then the Upper House, until the debate would at length grow warm, and my father's nose get redder and redder, a sure sign that both Tribunes and Decemviri were fast leaving my father's brains for their original habitation (the capitol), and which circumstance my penetrating mother hailed as presenting a favourable opportunity for her retiring once more to the studio, where there was every probability of her being able to carry on her sweeping sacrileges unobserved and undisturbed. But I, meanwhile, remained riveted to my chair by a display of oratory which I then thought could never be equalled. Here sat Sir Gilbert, with his little eyes twinkling like morning stars and his rubicund face on the broad grin—revelling in the victory which his sophistry, added to a correct knowledge of the politics of the day (obtained from his newspaper), readily and generally gave him over his excited and at the same time bigoted opponent.

But if Sir Gilbert could thus enjoy his triumph in the dining-room of Sabine Hall, what must have been his transport when it was attested by hundreds of voices applauding his overwhelming sentences ; whilst the Opposition benches yielded in

silence to the torrent of his eloquence, like reeds beneath a whirlwind. But the grand climax of the prandial discussion (for which, by-the-bye, Sir Gilbert always prepared himself by sundry deep libations of his favourite Burgundy), consisted in my father's rising from his chair, and striking the table (bright with the polish of an hundred years), at the same time that he addressed his torturer nearly in such words as follow :

"Sir Gilbert, I beg, Sir, this matter may rest here. I cannot suffer myself to get so warm (my father's face, at this time, seemed to have robbed the heavy moreen curtains of all their red), upon such a trifling subject—such useless nonsense. I tell you, Sir Gilbert, that such are my opinions : and I shall never change them, either to oblige you, Sir Gilbert, or any body else."

Now the explanation of all the above is, that my father, if any politician at all, was, as might be expected, a staunch supporter of all the admirable institutions and constitutions which time has fathered upon us, whether legitimate or illegitimate. To displace a stone of these fabrics was, in his opinion, to endanger the whole. For instance, he considered Cromwell as one of the greatest scoundrels that ever lived :—that Charles the First was a pious martyr ;—that James the Second, as a Roman Catholic, deserved his fate, being an enemy to the Protestant faith ;—that William and Mary were the pious restorers of the union of church and state ;—that Queen Anne, George the First, Second, and Third, were all great and glorious supporters of that system ; but that the latter more especially was a most exemplary, religious, patriotic, paternal, and peace-making monarch. Moreover, he affirmed that the national debt was a great debt, justly incurred for the benefit of all classes ; but that, if it were a curse, Bonaparte and the French were the cause of it, and not most certainly the Houses of Lords and Commons. In fine, my father's opinion was simply this,—that whatever is, is best ; and this he believed as fully as the clergymen of the Established Church are sworn to believe in the Thirty-nine Articles. But diametrically opposed to him was Sir Gilbert. His father, it is true, had been a rigid Constitutionalist, and his loyalty had secured him, not only a baronetcy, but something wherewith to support it (a court appointment), the spoils of which had descended to his only son, the present Sir Gilbert.

But he, like a great many other sons, although he had stepped into his father's shoes as to the title and estates, did not choose to wear his political armour ; on the contrary, he emplaced the ancestral escutcheon with the cross-bars of political illegitimacy or heresy. B—— Hall, with its magnificent estate, and a seat in parliament, had, in fact, descended to him, without the

trouble even of thinking about the one, or paying a few thousands for the other ; and, under such circumstances, it was not very unreasonable to expect he should adhere to the principles of the former Sir Gilbert :—he did, however, no such thing ;—and no sooner had he been returned for C—— (a mere appendant to his estate), than the Whig administration came into office.

Already had Sir Gilbert's maiden speech been hurled at the leaders of this party, and to no less than six tedious debates had he listened, when, his logical and metaphysical powers being any thing but contemptible, he at last arrived at the conclusion (which more than half the world had reached before him), that there was as much reason on one side as on the other, and that there could be no great harm done by his remaining, for that session, neutral — or as he facetiously termed himself, a political mermaid. But this politic decision (which, if it retarded not, most certainly did not advance the interests of his constituents) was not finally made, until Sir Gilbert had discovered the advantage which another club possessed over his own, not only in being much nearer his town residence in St. James's Square, but in a different way far more seductive. The point of all others on which Sir Gilbert piqued himself was political economy or wholesale finance, which the young Sir Gilbert, my schoolfellow, and to whom I am indebted for this brief sketch of the father, informed me, consisted, in his opinion, in discharging a number of needy, though efficient clerks, upon retiring pensions of 100*l.* a-year, in order to supply their places with the same number of the sons of influential men, and of course not needy persons, upon salaries of 200*l.* Economy, Sir Gilbert's strong point in the Commons, was not his weak one elsewhere, for he thought it madness to pay three shillings for a dinner at his present quarters, when at the new club he could be equally well accommodated for about half that sum—consequently, on this principle, he at once enrolled his name amongst the Whigs ; and from the line of argument he pursued over my father's Burgundy, on subsequent occasions, there is no reason to suppose that he rejoined his former allies, the Tories.

I was now in my twentieth year — and still I remained under my father's surveillance. With the world, beyond the walls of Harrow, I had hitherto held no communion, and it was difficult to say, when and in what character I was to make my *début*. This serious question, however, having been at length placed in my own hands for decision, I was not long in forming one. Let fortune sport as she liked with that mysterious thing, my existence, I knew that sooner or later I must come into the possession of Sabine Hall, besides funded property to the amount of many thousands ; nevertheless, I determined not to remain an idler,

but to become an active if not a useful member of the community; to live as an intellectual rather than a mere sensual being; and neither to waste my fortune nor destroy my health in the too common pursuits, or rather dissipations, of a country gentleman,—namely, the sports of the turf or vinous debauches at the table. The course I pursued, however, is foreign to these recollections. My career has been a varied one, and some other day I may take up my pen to portray it; meanwhile, I here bid farewell to the reader and to *Sabine Hall*.

THE END.

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